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# ZZAP! 64

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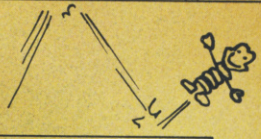
# ZZAP! 64

ISSUE 14 JUNE 1986



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**JULY-DEC** 1985
**Total :** 42,973
**UK** 40,603

**Cover by Oliver Frey**

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Be Alert. The next issue of ZZAP! goes on sale on June 12th, and you wouldn't want to miss out now, would you. Besides, Britain Needs Lerts if the country is to stay ahead. Keep the country ahead, keep ZZAP! ahead in the country and we'll let you keep your head. Okay?

# Prepare yours

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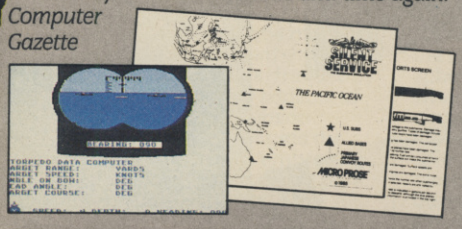

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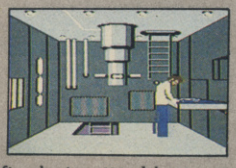

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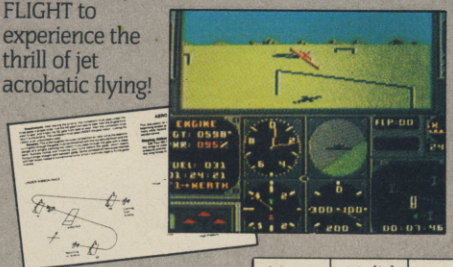

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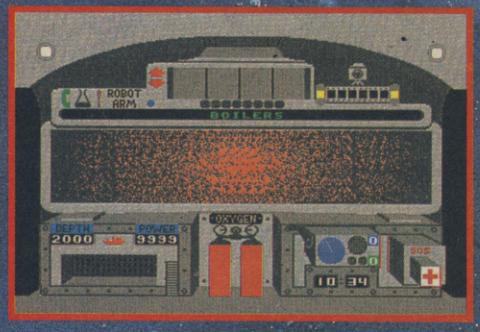


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# ZZAP! ED

## ZZAP! — THE CORRUPT ONE

In a recent edition of the trade paper *Computer Trade Weekly* (Week of April 21st) *Commodore Computing International*'s publisher **Antony Jacobson** launched a blistering attack on ZZAP! 64 and CRASH. In the introduction to his piece he says, 'The issue I have to hand of Zzap 64 has 37 pages of reviews and 14 pages of competitions . . . (not so much yawn as 'yuk').

Further on he adds, ' . . . magazines of the style of *Crash* and *Zzap* etc have brought the general regard for the home computer to the elevated level of the hula hoop . . . ' and then tells us that what he refers to as 'comic mags' are 'little more than compendia of infantile level games reviews, frequently ridiculing any other aspects of computing. Mr Jacobson considers that ZZAP gets the readers it deserves, embracing the dictum that you never go broke underestimating the intelligence of an audience. 'There is always an audience for simple-minded pap,' he says, referring to ZZAP! readers, 'but such magazines do not live in a vacuum; they harm everybody's interests in anything but the short term.'

The vitriol throwing isn't over yet . . . 'The nasty trivialisation that the *Crash*-style stable offers, like a fluff covered lollipop, is, I regret to think, no doubt good for the bank balances of its publishers, but for the UK computer industry it is corrupting and dangerous.' And . . . 'Poor *Commodore User*, losing circulation in its gadarene rush to follow *Zzap*, is an example of what can happen to anyone when the rot sets in.' Rebutting the possible argument that his remarks are sour grapes, envy that ZZAP! has done so well recently, Mr Jacobson says, ' . . . a certain kind of magazine should only be handled with rubber gloves and antiseptic fire tongs. No-one forces them to publish contagious rubbish but magazines that do so are not simply to be described as boring, but debasing the values of their readership . . . and polluting the social and commercial environment in which we live and work.'

It seems a pity that Antony Jacobson should have so much to say about the kind of people who read ZZAP! (and by implication, *Commodore User*) only in the trade press where it is extremely unlikely to be seen by the general public. Why hasn't he aired such views in his own consumer magazine, *Commodore Computing International*? Could it be something to do with not taking a lion by the tail in case it turns round and bites? But perhaps the real meat of Mr Jacobson's submission comes near the end where he mentions that *CCI*'s circulation has risen every month since last August, but in spite of this unproven fact, *CCI* has failed to return an Audit Bureau of Circulations figure since 1982! It colours his statements and somehow leaves a lingering taste of soured grapes . . .

That *CCI* sees itself as a serious users' magazine and not primarily one concerned with the 'toy shop', I don't doubt; that it should fight for its place in the market on those grounds is also quite acceptable. What is hardly sensible is ranting about magazines and their readers who have opted for a vital part of the market that the long established *CCI* has largely avoided. It does, of course, carry games reviews (they tend to be good for the publishers' bank balances because of the advertising), so there's more than an element of hypocrisy in Mr Jacobson's comments, and I suspect it is this, together with a desire to tell the trade that *CCI* is doing well in its sector, and a desire not to alienate any potential readers by describing them and their taste as 'trivialised' and 'nasty', that has led Mr Jacobson to promote his thoughts in the comparative secrecy of the trade press rather than in the open.

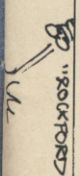
I see very little need to defend ZZAP! against Antony Jacobson's arguments, in the main they are self-defeating, a voice in the wilderness trying to tell you that what you are doing is bad for you, but more importantly, bad for him. If Mr Jacobson is so convinced that there is a vital market for the more serious user magazine, then he presumably would be well content as things are — but that obviously isn't the case, as he so eloquently shows . . .

### APOLOGY

In the past, the White Wizard has published the name, address and telephone number of **Ivan Latter**, in connection with adventure problem help. We received a letter from Mrs Latter informing us that this should not have happened, as her son does not have access to the games listed and did not write in himself. This has caused the Latters some embarrassment. The listing has not appeared in recent copies of ZZAP!, but if you are looking at any older issues, please ignore it!

### THE SOFTWARE RUNS

As predicted, the software state has taken a dramatic upturn this month, so no grumbles about games to review, just the space to fit in all the good ones! It all bodes well for the forthcoming Commodore Show in London at the Novotel. Many, if not all, the ZZAP! team will be present (as long as we can keep Gary Liddon on the stand — he tends to wander off for a cup of tea if he's let off the leash for a few minutes), and we're looking forward to seeing as many readers as can make it.





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**THE MONTHLY SOFTWARE STAR FOR YOUR US GOLD CALENDAR**

US GOLD ZZAP 64

US GOLD ZZAP 64

As we get near the middle of the year, the major concerns in my mail bag this month seem to be the state of software releasing generally (not enough of it) and whether when we get it the team review it properly. As usual, opposing views tend to go hand in hand, merely proving once again that you can't please everyone or agree with everyone. Some of the feelings are summed up in one mega-letter of criticism, as you'll see.

Spring-like weather has finally struck Ludlow, which means darkness hits ZZAP! Towers as the curtains are drawn against the sunshine striking the computer monitor screens. Sometimes, working in this place these days is like living inside a cinema — you emerge at six with surprise to see it's still daylight! Isn't life wonderful etc. Onto your letters with haste . .

I picked out the following for letter of the month, not so much for its first paragraph, more for the feeling attack on my letter replies, an angle the 'mega-letter' I mentioned before takes as well. Ah me ah my . . .

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

# ON THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

Dear ZZAP!
The reason for my writing is to emphasize, as several of your readers already have, that your magazine is on the slide. Admittedly the quality of reviews remains unrivalled but why must you analyse games that were reviewed months ago — Okay so you may be short of software to review but I suggest that instead of going over old ground you fill the empty spaces with more interviews, articles on piracy/software that has never been released, the future of the 64 (after all will you all be playing on your 64s in 3 years time or will you have an Atari ST or an Amiga in the corner of the bedroom?). Coupled with this is your monthly cartoon saga — this is supposed to be a computer games magazine NOT a comic; if I wanted one I'd order The Sun!

Finally, and most serious, is the fact that you are becoming hostile towards readers who criticise your magazine in any way — you yourselves have said that everyone has their own opinions and surely your readers are entitled to theirs without you slagging them off — I will quote just one example.

Alistair O' Hinton wrote asking why no ratings were given for *Deus Ex Machina* to which your reply was . . . 'What is this constant obsession with ratings. Don't you READ what the reviewers have to say . . .' What a reply — do you think Alistair is a moron or something? In his letter he said that he enjoys reading your magazine, obviously regards your ratings highly because these can 'jog his memory when buying a game'. I fail to comprehend your mentality when buying a game. I fail to comprehend your mentality in suggesting that he is incapable of assessing the value of a game without ratings.

I feel that ZZAP! is becoming too subjective in its replies to readers and such naive narrow mindedness can only lead to loss of readership. And don't ever forget that Alistair and the rest of your readers pay YOUR wages. Think about it.
**Kevin Robson, West Wratting, Cambridgeshire**

*Okay, Kevin, I own up — I'm a crotchety, emotionally unstable, contradictory, unhelpful, curmudgeon — and perhaps you're right. Well I certainly agree that you luvverly people pay my wages and keep my cottage in wood fuel etc. If my reply to Alistair's letter seemed unduly harsh, I apologise, but I happen to feel quite strongly that the reviews and not the ratings are the key thing, so I get a bit worked up when it 'sounds' as though someone is annoyed because ratings are left out in a case where we don't think they apply. The pernicious danger of ratings is that when they ARE applied in a difficult context they can damage a product when they shouldn't do so. With* Deus Ex Machina, *I'm sure most people who own or have seen it would agree that it is hard if not irrelevant to rate it like most games. Sorry Alistair, I'll go and dip my smarting wrist in cold water Kevin. Anyway, please accept this bribe of £20 worth of software and only think nicely of me thereafter . . . !*
**LM**

## GIMME MORE!

Dear ZZAP! Reviewers,
I have been a dedicated subscriber to your magazine since its birth and I, like Steven Wardlaw in issue 12, can keep quiet no longer. I am very concerned over the decline in the numbers of reviews published each month. I can understand that some months offer fewer releases but surely the opportunity could be taken to review some earlier releases prior to your Inauguration. Many can be found at reduced prices or in Compilation Tapes so I'm sure these 'Golden Oldie' Reviews would be welcomed.

ZZAPBACK! However in my opinion was wasted space, Hurry up please and publish an index for the 1st 12 Issues and anyone wanting these earlier reviews can pinpoint which back issue to order (every issue being worth every penny).

I'm now approaching the end of my first 12 months subscription deposit and I'm hoping (alright begging!) for another US GOLD, Beyond or similar offer to attract subscriptions. I took advantage of one of your earliest offers (ie, 12 months of ZZAP!+*Bruce Lee*) for £14.50 and all delivered to my door. Incredible but true! So please (more begging) team up with a software house for another bargain offer. And before you reply, yes I know, ZZAP! is an astounding offer without any dressing up. But you can't blame me for asking.

I have been using the 'Hand On Tape Deck' trick for the past year (if all else fails) and there is a definite improvement. I only use very slight pressure so maybe I'm not forcing the tape into alignment. I think it may reduce the very slight vibration of the C2N, especially when it's on a hard surface. Maybe my body is affecting the small magnetic field around the tape decks? Anyway whatever the reason, it helps.

**Brief Comments:-**
**Compunet/Art Gallery**
I don't possess a modem but I am interested in knowing and seeing what I'm missing. Is it possible to hear what I'm missing??? Brigitte's comments I would rate as 1st class garble (Bang goes my letter of the month).
**Shadow Spiel News**
Short, good for gossip, to the point, news. Like it a lot
**Previews**
Have you a 'Dusty Bin' in the office? Give me your 1st class COMPLETE Reviews any day of the month.

I'm not asking for any software or T-shirts just a pat on the back for actually writing to you. Your magazine gives us so much food for thought, it stimulates the brain, it arouses the mind — I'm becoming boring aren't I, so I'll stop.
**Ian Banks, Canterbury, Kent**

*Obviously there's nothing we can do about the quantity of software released per month, and that has to determine how many reviews there are. However, your idea of more oldies being reviewed isn't so bad — I'll put it to the others. However, as you've seen, the first letter writer doesn't agree with you! Don't forget we have done the odd 'Past Blaster' now and then. As for ZZAPBACK, it would appear, judging from some letters I've seen, to be reasonably popular, and it isn't intended as a 'filler' when there are less reviews. Subs offers like the' early ones? Well, they are proving a bit difficult to keep up since we have run through so many back catalogues, but as I write there are some ideas in the pipeline.*
**LM**

## FAITH RESTORED

Dear Lloyd,
Just thought I'd write and let you know that my faith in yourself, Gary and yes even that ex-Computer and thingummy doobries video game champion has been thoroughly restored.

Out of all the so called honest reviews in other unmentionable magazines good old ZZAP! was the only one to give *Rock N Wrestle* what it truly deserved, some criticism. Unfortunately I had already parted with the hard earned folding stuff by the time I saw a truthful review, a lesson to be learnt for the future though. Actually I was beginning to think I was getting too old to keep up with the times because there I was getting bored silly with a so called mega game telling myself I should be enjoying it when thankfully ZZAP! plopped through my letterbox and saved the day. Thanks lads you have stopped a video veteran short circuiting.

When I say my faith has been restored it's just my way of saying that I think the odd one or two reviews have been a bit iffy as of late, for instance I find *The Eidolon* a little on the boring side whilst I love a good thrash on *Commando*, still I suppose it takes all sorts to make a world.

Whilst I'm in the mood for games talk I would like to take this opportunity to ask a question which has been niggling me for sometime, well several questions actually.

Now that I've actually seen some screen shots of Ocean's *Superbowl* game I feel really depressed, ie it's not really what I was expecting — why oh why can't we have an American football simulation that takes the same viewpoint as Commodore's *International Soccer*, from the side.

I mean the Commodore hails from America right? the Americans are mad on *Gridiron* right? so there must surely be a real time side on *Gridiron* game available in America right? If there isn't I'm sure Andrew Spencer or the maestro gamers of Epyx are more than capable of such a game which would be a certain top five game if it were executed correctly so there!

Secondly I must say that out of all the games I have *International Soccer* is the only one I find myself going back to time and time again, a real classic, but — well, it's three years old now and I think we ought really to be having an enhanced football game now with: 1 Constant crowd background noise that increases with the home team's attacks plus a few oooohs and aahhs as the ball hits the post or bar. 2 Home games/away games/night matches. 3 The ability to play in blue and white stripes because everybody knows Sheffield Wednesday are the best team in the world! I just wish that somebody that could do this would, so that those of us who can't can make them very rich by buying such a game.

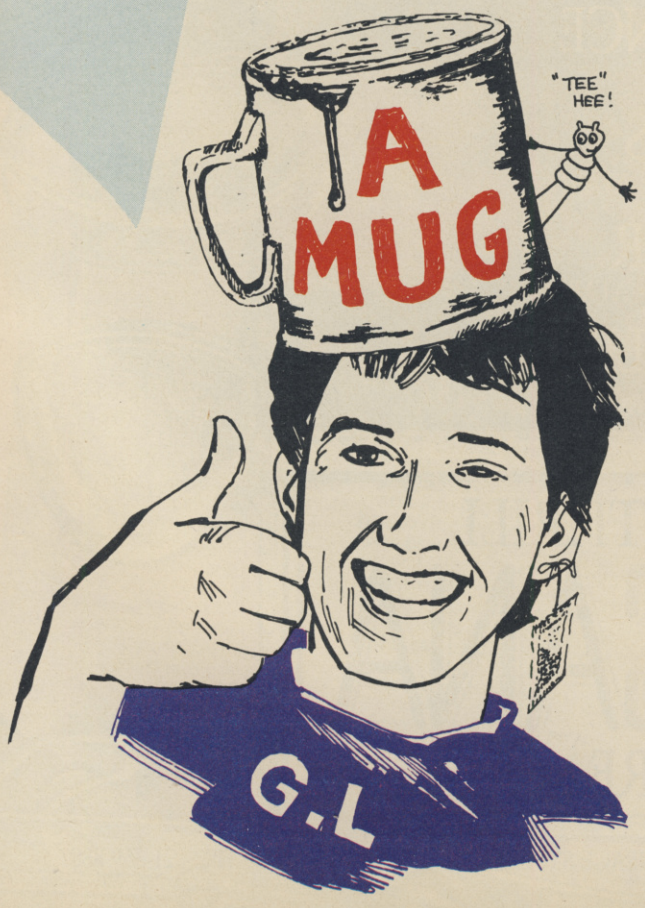
Sorry to hear that releases are getting a bit thin on the ground and I hope for everyone's sake things pick up. We could be facing the end of an era and I don't know what I'd do without my ZZAP! for comfort.

**Nicholas Smith, Clowne, Derbyshire**

*The 'ex-Computer and thingummy doobries video game champion' has been thoroughly restored by your kind comments. He's been suffering a bit lately at the hands of the others for having appeared on the cover of issue 13. (Actually it's all a bit unfair because that wasn't really JR at all, the inspiration came from the 'Wild Boys' video, not from seeing Rignall battling with* Rock N Wrestle*). Since software houses are always on the lookout for a popular idea, perhaps someone will now pick you up on the 'Gridiron' idea — who knows?*

*The release situation is just a bit better this month, so perhaps everyone's climbing out of their traditional post-Christmas blues (at last)! As far as* R'n'W *is concerned, the next writer has a slightly different view.*

**LM**




## STAR HITS BACK

Dear ZZAP!
How dare you insult me so much. I was flicking through the pages of my favourite magazine (apart from *Playboy*) and I saw that someone was imitating me. A certain Gary Penn!

These guys who spotted him must be rewarded, I'll send you two a Roller each. As for Gary Penn I'll have him for fraud if he's not careful. Well, that'll be all for now fans.

Love to everyone who likes my music.

**George Michael, George Michael's House, London**

*Well! That must be a hard one to beat. I bet even* Smash Hits *doesn't have famous pop stars writing in! I didn't think this letter was going to get through, though, it should have ended up in the waste bin with the other three hundred 'George Michael' letters. Gosh — I hope one of them wasn't really from George. Do you think it's possible? Anyway, as you saw last month, Gary was well and truly spotted!*

**LM**

## TEABOY TWO

Dear ZZAP!
Why do you all slag Mr Liddon for being a teaboy? I myself happen to be one, IT'S GREAT!! It's the best job around. I can do anything I want in the office, like reset my boss's £3,000 computer with my nail clipper when he's out with the BOYS!

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK MR LIDDON!!

**Angus Lee, Aberdeen**

*You're obviously very advanced then, for* **Mister** *Liddon has only just learnt how to reset his nail clippers.*

**LM**

## LET'S SEE LLOYD

Dear ZZAP!
It seems that everyone has accepted the arrival of Lloyd Mangram from CRASH without asking for a picture of him. In some issues of CRASH I have read, several readers have made the claim that Lloyd does not exist. I think that I am beginning to think the same. So, to prove that Lloyd Mangram isn't just a figment of someone's imagination, send him along to the Commodore show on Friday 9th of MAY and we will meet him at the ZZAP! stand sometime during the day. Lloyd, be there or be disbelieved in. I promise that no cameras will be present to record the moment for posterity.

And also, being the greatest gamesplayers in the known world my friends and I will be pleased to take any of the ZZAP! staff on at any game they choose (except *Dropzone*).

**Nathan Tuck, Paul Lloyd, Andrew Hudson and Nicholas Yarham (The fabulous four), Neatishead, Norwich**

*If you've seen the arguments in CRASH then you'll have seen the replies too! I sometimes wonder if I'm not a figment of my own imagination the way people are so readily happy to deny my very existence. As for computer shows — can't stand the things, too many people dashing about grabbing plastic bags and free badges and asking for free inlay cards to make their illicit collections respectable! By the way, what's wrong with* Dropzone*, or is it that you're not exactly the World's best gamesplayers? You can argue it out at the show — just about all the ZZAPers will be there — me, I'll be busy on my other job, doing bits for CRASH.*

**LM**

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# A QUICK SHOT AT A JOYSTICK

Dear Lloyd.
Your reader, Roger Cragg (p14 Issue 11, March 86), who has had a Quickshot II for about a year and is still going strong despite being used on *Airwolf*, DT's Decathlon etc, is very fortunate. I used to have two perfect Quickshot IIs which I treated with extreme care.

However, just before Christmas they both broke within a week of each other in exactly the same place! Both now fail to respond to any right-hand movement.

I immediately wrote to Spectravideo to ask why this should happen, but as yet I have received no reply. Perhaps you can ask them on my behalf what has happened to my letter, since to me such a long silence demonstrates very poor after-sales service.

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on this advice to your readers — take note of the Zzapstick reviews! I fully agree with the comment that the Quickshot II is not for those who play rough (but I was not rough with mine, so why did they break so easily? Please answer me, Spectravideo)!

I therefore conclude that it is much better to save up an extra £5 or so to buy a decent joystick that will last much, much longer (such as one in the Euromax range). Meanwhile, I have two useless heaps of twisted plastic, unless you know of any games that do not require right-hand movement!

**Andrew Denyer, Farnham, Surrey**

*If you really haven't bashed them around and you haven't had them for very long, then I would suggest you go back to the shop of purchase and see whether the consumer protection act extends to goods like joysticks! Still it would be nice if Spectravideo answered your complaint.*
**LM**

# ROCKED BY WRESTLE

Dear Lloyd,
I'm just writing in to suggest some advice about your reviews. Apart from being rather good by printing, JazGazzaGaz and sometimes Paz's comments, and including a concise evaluation table, they tell the reader a large amount about the same. This is one very good feature of the reviews in that it gives potential buyers a chance to decide whether they're even going to like the type of game being reviewed.

Apart from disagreeing with the odd review, one game you looked at in your April mag was looked at (in my view) the completely wrong way. The game in question is MBH's *Rock and Wrestle*, one you may recall gave you some disappointment.

The documentation explaining the idea, moves and opponents was fine, it's just that JazGazzaGaz's comments were somewhat misleading to the mild-mannered punter. Both Julian and Gary Liddon complained that the game was a disappointing follow up to *Fist*, (and I agree with you on this). On the quality of the graphics, Gary Penn did say that the idea was hard to reproduce on a home computer (as well as expressing his views on sonics and graphics) but hardly anywhere in the appraisal's were there any views of interest. Also, did you play the two player version? It adds a certain enjoyment when you see your best friend hammered into the canvas!

You've probably realised by now that I do have *Rock 'n' Wrestle* and that I do in fact enjoy it immensely. Don't think that I'm having a go at you, but not having played the 64 version of *Fist*, the sound and graphics do not worry me. I just assumed that with all those moves and opponents Greg Barnett had little room for excellent music or animation!

Anyway just to wipe the slate clean, here's my theory on Thing and **The Shadow**. Thing is an infiltrator from planet 'Z', home of the mutant Gremlinoids. This planet is ruled by **The Shadow**, a lone crusader to fight criminals who operate above the law. He is champion of the innocent, the helpless and the powerless. Also, he is a complete wally who beamed down to earth in his quest for the perfect beat . . . Eventually he wound up in ZZAP! Towers to parlez with his buddy Thing and to get the lowdown on the Ludlow mafia.

Today, still wanted by the government, he survives as a soldier of fortune, based in an inconspicuous corner of the dreaded Newsfield empire, defending the mortal Gary Penn from the lynchmob of maniacs, the Ludlow mafia (as well as this he also has a part-time job of gossip-spreader). If you have a problem if no one else can help, then if you can find him, maybe you can hire, **The Shadow . . .**
**Tim Bowden, Wrington, Avon**
**PS** Please ask Gary Penn, to print a map of *Robin of the Wood*.

*Gary tells me that everyone did have a go at the two-player option and, yes, it certainly makes it more fun, but they still stand by their findings that the game was slower and more confusing than they had hoped for.*

*As for* **The Shadow**, *et al (and Newsfield empire is spelt with a capital 'E' in Empire), a kindly software soul sent us in two long playing records (you know, the things they had before CDs) containing episodes from an early American radio show based on* **The Shadow**, *right down to period adverts for early versions of loo bloo in between.*

*I'll see what I can do about* Robin of the Wood *and his map — Penn permitting.*
**LM**

# DOOMDARK'S WRATH

Dear Lloyd,
Get your hankies ready for I am about to recount for you a tale of great woe. It involves a certain computer game by the name of *Doomdark's Revenge* and the futile (so far) attempts of my friends and I to purchase it.

Monday March 3rd — A friend at school brings in a copy of April's *Commodore User*, it contains a review of *Doomdark's Revenge* and the game in question is at No 9 in their readers' adventure chart, so we logically deduce that it must be available.

Tuesday March 4th — To confirm these deductions I phone ZZAP! in Shropshire and ask if *Doomdark's* is out and if there will be a review in the next issue of ZZAP! Yes I am told, it's out and there will be a review in the next ZZAP!

Saturday March 8th — we set off for Hammersmith and then Oxford Street with the money we had been saving for this day since last March. But we are told in both places that Doomdark's was not yet out! We do however pick up a copy of April's ZZAP! in the Virgin Games store (how come they get theirs so early?) only to find, no review. There is however an advert for *Doomdark's* it says (and I quote) 'available now from software dealers everywhere'.

We rather angrily by now storm into the nearest phone box to ring Beyond, but there is no phone number on the advert! Grrrr! There is though an address for Beyond's offices in London, so after many hours of searching we find these offices (about ten minutes from where we started) and guess what, they're shut!

Anyway the date is now Tuesday 18th of March, and still no sign of *Doomdark's Revenge*, so please put me out of my misery, what's going on?

Yours impatiently,
**Neil McTernan, Isleworth, Middlesex**

*You're out of your misery now, Neil,* Doomdark's Revenge *is now out. As I work on this column the game has just been written up (finished about five minutes ago in fact), and as you can see it is in this issue. Quite how it got reviewed by anyone else when it has only just come out is beyond me (pun intended), let alone how it got into anyone's readers' chart. I'm also surprised that anyone at ZZAP! told you there would be a review last ish — certainly no one on the editorial floor knows about that.*
**LM**

# ANNOYED, BOTHERED AND IRRITATED

Dear Sirs,
As a retailer I have been buying and reading ZZAP! since its birth and in general, find it to be informative, up to date, entertaining and useful. It's a bit infantile sometimes and pretentious at others, but on balance, well worth having. However, your reaction to readers' critical letters is becoming defensive and lacking in objectivity.

Reference Daniel Dalton's letter 'Getting the timing right' — his criticism is entirely valid. You have a responsibility to your readers AND advertisers to be fair. In order to be fair you should review only COMPLETED programs. If you must give advance news then, please, take great care not to get over-enthusiastic. It can lead to great dissatisfaction by purchasers as is evident from Daniel's letter. If, in a PRE-view, your writer gives a rave opinion and the game arrives in the shops before an amended review can correct that opinion, then the game will sell well on a false promise. The blame for this is entirely attributable to your PRE-view. Please don't make excuses like 'you can't blame anyone for wanting to share the info. with you'. You ARE blamed and, when the info is misleading, it is right that you should be!

Ashley Hynd's letter, 'A biased empire', held several valid criticisms which you chose to evade by attacking him, thus instantly proving one of his points — that you are distancing yourself from your readership! I take some of his points and your somewhat thoughtless responses:

1 Lucasfilm reviews: His wording exaggerates his case but his point is valid. Considering they 'have only had FOUR games out', the magazine has given an inordinate amount of space to this company. In my opinion, the games are brilliantly programmed but not very entertaining and they do not sell well.

2 Little Computer People: Again, superbly programmed but, whether on disk or tape, rapidly becomes boring — only taking a little longer on disk! I would rate 'Lastability' at less than 50% Incidentally, I have tried very hard to starve several LCPs to death with a total lack of success and I am quite certain that it is impossible.

3 His accusation of 'freaks who do nothing each day except play games', and his suggestion that they can't have played LCP for more than an hour may or may not be true. However, the two statements ARE compatible. Your guys MAY play games (note the plural) all day, but it certainly does NOT follow that any single title MUST then have received more than an hour's play! You give a totally useless reply to another correspondent's query on time devoted to game play later on. Why not quote each reviewer's time on the game at the end of his comments?

4 You ridicule him for criticising your bad timing of reviews. Perhaps I could clarify his point. You have been known to review three months before release or, less often, three months after release. I support his view that this is irritating. What he and many others would like is a review within one month. I know this may be difficult to arrange but you are professionals and any problems you have should be taken up with the program publisher, not in offending your readers.

5 I quote you: 'Whoever said ZZAP! was primarily a review magazine?' 'This may be one of the single most important aspects . . .' I suggest that the second quote is tantamount to an admission that it IS primarily a review magazine. Think about it! His suggestion of cutting down on interviews is rather narrow but it is a perfectly valid opinion. From talking to many customers and friends I can say that the vast majority DO buy it primarily as a review magazine so he is not alone.

Verbally abusing your readers is hardly a constructive or intelligent response and you will probably lose more than Ashley's support through your offensively evasive reply to his letter.

Duncan Trigg 'Revving up': Your reply, while being longer than his letter, is as misleading as the original review! If you fail to see why there was any confusion about it, I suggest that you try reading it. It does NOT mention either paddles or analogue joysticks! Most 64 owners find it totally unacceptable to play an arcade game on keyboard only and it makes for one VERY expensive game to have to purchase extra controls before being able to play sensibly. That apart, have you actually tried to BUY paddles? They are virtually unobtainable, even if you have £13 spare. If these facts had been well known, I believe that most dealers wouldn't have even stocked *Revs*, knowing that it simply would not sell.

If you set yourselves up as judges (reviewers) then you must expect to be judged yourselves and you should recognise that some of the criticism is accurate, if not always well expressed. As professional journalists, you have an obligation to act in a responsible and mature way, giving factually accurate and objective opinions. The magazine is currently a bit sloppy on both counts and, if this arrogance continues, you will lose a great deal of goodwill. The response of WH Smith is clear enough evidence of this. Without readers you are nothing and you ignore this at your peril.

On a more general note regarding Ms Van Reuben — the aim of publishing the printed word is to convey information to others. If this goal is not achieved then it is pure self-indulgence.

**John Trott, TC Computing Services, Coleraine, Co Londonderry**

*Hmmm, Mr Trott — what a lot to answer! Perhaps first I ought to say that I'm dead against offering wimpish replies to letters, especially if I think the correspondent is in error. In the past I've also apologised in print if someone has shown me to be wrong.*

*PREVIEWS: ZZAP! does only review COMPLETED games. As an entertainment vehicle, we are surely supposed to be enthusiastic about the product we look at, and there has to be some responsibility from the reader to take the headings seriously — a PREview is not a REview. You are, of course, correct about the use of enthusiastic preview comments by software houses on their packaging being misleading, and as a general rule, from now on, everyone will try to be careful — but as I'm sure you know, almost any series of comments can be regurgitated with suitable editing to make a favourable comment out of something that in context was less so.*

*LUCASFILM ET AL: Again, ZZAP! has a job to do and when a powerful new market force appears, we would be failing if we didn't cover it in detail. Lucasfilm games have been reviewed, as would any other, all four of them,* The Eidolon *has had four levels mapped, and there has been an interview with some of the people in America. This is hardly any more coverage than many other companies or games have had. I think you're exaggerating for the sake of making a point. The rest concerning LCP devolves into matters of personal taste.*

*GAME PLAYING TIME: I think it's quite irrelevant how much time each reviewer spends playing games. Very few games ever get less than an hour per reviewer for sure, some get hours more, it all depends on how complex they are and, of course, how interesting to the player. Being a reviewer is not as straightforward as it may seem to many people. Anyone who enjoys playing games can say, 'I could review this as well as Gary Penn,' for instance, but experience with virtually every game on the market, and the continuity that provides, is what makes the difference. The time spent playing any one game is not important because a review is a collection of personal feelings based on long knowledge — a review is NOT the definitive view of a game or a detail of every aspect of it or its performance.*

*TIMING OF REVIEWS: being supposedly professionals has little to do with when reviews appear as against when games actually get released. As a company we have taken a stand in the computer trade press about release dates, but the situation is that we are all stuck with the supply of pre-production and production copies. On several occasions, games have been sent out for review and then delayed. Taking into account the length of magazine production schedules, there is quite some room for divergence between reviewing a game and its release or availability. Sometimes the reviewers can't even find out when a game will be on sale.*

*ZZAP!: of course ZZAP! is primarily a review magazine — primarily to us means a bit over half — half of the time it's a lot of other things too.*

*REVS REVIEW: I'm sorry to have to abuse yet another reader! Obviously you haven't really read the review properly EITHER! Take another look, please, at the strap at the top with the game title in it. Do you not see the words 'REVS, Firebird, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk, analogue joystick, paddles or keys'??*

*Whether analogue joysticks are available or not is hardly germane to this argument.*

*I shan't comment on Ms Van Reuben beyond saying that, quite honestly, if you can't see what is at work there, then there is little else to say on the matter.*

**LM**

# SHOCK HORROR

*It seems that while he was reading an Argos Catalogue recently, ZZAP! reader* **Lee Cottrell** *from Camberley, Surrey, noticed, SHOCK HORROR, that Julian Rignall is a model . . . !*

*But Gary Penn, too, it seems has a body to be proud of — well he's proud of it anyway. Thanks for the probing evidence Lee.*

**LM**

## SO-O-O-o-o EXCELLENT

Dear ZZAP!

Are you sitting comfortably, Good, then I'll begin. First the moans and groans what the hell is wrong with Julius Wrigley. (or whoever he is). Why is it that whenever he is doing a report on a sizzler or gold medal, he uses the words 'excellent, excellently' and other excellent sounding words more than your average carbon oxy-hydrogen based life forms.

Take issue 11 *The Arc of Yesod* review report features the word 'excellent' at least 6 times in as many sentences. To an average reader it sounds something like this . . . The excellent graphics are excellently excellent. The excellent sound is also excellent with excellent use of the excellent sound facilities of the excellent C64. Sheesh! His English is only marginally better than his Welsh.

Now a moan about the other two experts (yet another 'ex' word. Do we have to be subjected every month to the secret diary of Gary Liddon's tea making abilities. As far as I can see, tea making has nothing to do with games playing unless you have found some way of making tea whilst simultaneously scoring 40,000,000 on *Monty Mole*! Now its Mr Ga-Ga-Gary Penn. Why don't you smile Mr Penn? Has someone pinched your Rupert scarf or do you enjoy having a face as long as the Channel tunnel. Perhaps you are miserable because they won't update your review face.

Now a general moan about an otherwise excellent (oh no not again!) magazine. What's all this phoney SHADOWSPIEL stuff. Only an imbecile wouldn't have noticed that the two pictures of the Shadow at the end of issue 11 was Gary Liddon and Julian Rignall dressed up. Don't deny it lads — own up!

The last moan is one that crops up again and again in reviews. Taking issue 11 (excellent) what have the reviews of these games got in common . . . *Kane*, *Kung-fu Master*, *One Man And His Droid* and *Uridium*. They all contain words or phrases to this effect . . . 'The jolly excellent spaceship/horse/man/droid sits in the middle of the screen whilst the screen scrolls excellently around him'.

If I had a ZZAP! binder for every time I had seen this phrase in a review, I would have more blummin binders than you guys. What do you expect the damned things to do — jump out of the screen and start toddling about all over your table? Please rid yourself of this phrase, or at least consult the (excellent) long word dictionary more often.

It's Okay guys you can start reading again, the moans are over. Now the crawling, creeping 'Please make me letter of the month', type bit. Praise must be expressed for your excellent (oh no I can't help it) offers and competitions. The reviews are in general excellent (aagh) if a little biased and the articles are ex— er good, if a little obscure.

The gossip column is good but the best idea (which has been overlooked so far but suggested by one reader) is to have a comic art section for readers cartoons of their heroes, the fun boy three. Having already submitted a cartoon to you guys, which wasn't printed but was excellent (Stomm!) I would like to see how my sketches compare with other readers.

ZZAP Reader, Barton Estate, Headinton, Oxford

*At least, dear ZZAP! Reader, your letter had us all in mild hysterics for an afternoon. You don't know how wrong you are about the Shadow (after all, he is not a man of mortal flesh, I'm told), and he certainly isn't 'Gary Liddon and Julian Rignall dressed up'. ZZAP! is a cultural way of life, and tea is an important aspect of that, which is why we talk about it so often. Thank you, at any rate, for your lovely comments, most of which are truly excellent.*

**LM**


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# ZZAP! RRAP

## BRIBED RATINGS!

Dear Zzap!
I am getting increasingly annoyed at the ratings which you give some games. I almost tend to think sometimes that you are bribed or blackmailed to award high or low marks. Okay, some games are a flop and do deserve a bad rating but there are games which you give good marks, which don't rightly deserve them. Take *Mercenary* for example, the ratings for that are about right except for the graphics: 98% — more like 78% come on.

I think that if you compared a couple of games together, the ratings might be shuffled around accordingly.

Another thing, the review on *Kung Fu Master* was reasonable but the screen shots were terrible. I reckon the TV must have had a fit, when they were taken.

Don't get me wrong by these cruel words, I enjoy your magazine (best for 64) and agree with 95% of the reviews.
**RN. Bexley, Kent**
**PS** How about interviewing the genius with the colouring set, Oliver Frey, he's great.

*I thought the best thing would be to get GP, GL and JR to pass comment on your* Mercenary *comments — and they say — no, well perhaps I won't print your comment Liddon — seriously, they say you obviously don't appreciate the superbness of the fast 3D vector graphics, the best around. I assure you, we aren't bribed to give good or bad reviews, that would undermnine the whole point of ZZAP! The* Kung Fu Master *shots were in mono from colour transparencies, not the best combination, and they were unfortunately made a bit more dull by the addition of colour tints over them — we're not doing that much any more! Oli was profiled in the Christmas Special, didn't you see it?*
**LM**

## CNET MAKES HIM HAPPY

Dear Lloyd,
No crawling here. I'll get straight to the Point. I'm lucky enough to own a CNET Modem, so enjoy your sections on Compunet immensely, though I think you dwell too much on the art gallery. Perhaps if you emphasised how good the music and hacks are or even highlighted some of the user groups it would incite more people to purchase a CNET subscription. I realise the visual impact art has on readers and is more interesting to view. Also for the benefit of us CNETers why not print the directory numbers under the various works. OK, well that's that then. I think your mag's an excellent read.
**Sie, Wigan, Lancs**
**PS** Hi to Yorkie, Clem, Matt and Black Adder (thanks for the mention in cover 3)
**PPS** I bet you don't print the names above that is if you print this letter, if you do though but find there are too many then just edit Yorkie. He won't mind, hehehe.

*You answered your main question — the art is more interesting visually, and it's hard to describe the music. Hopefully, the two Garies will be covering more aspects of CNET life shortly. Part of their problem is the time it takes up! (See* **The Shadow**).
**LM**

## SORRY!

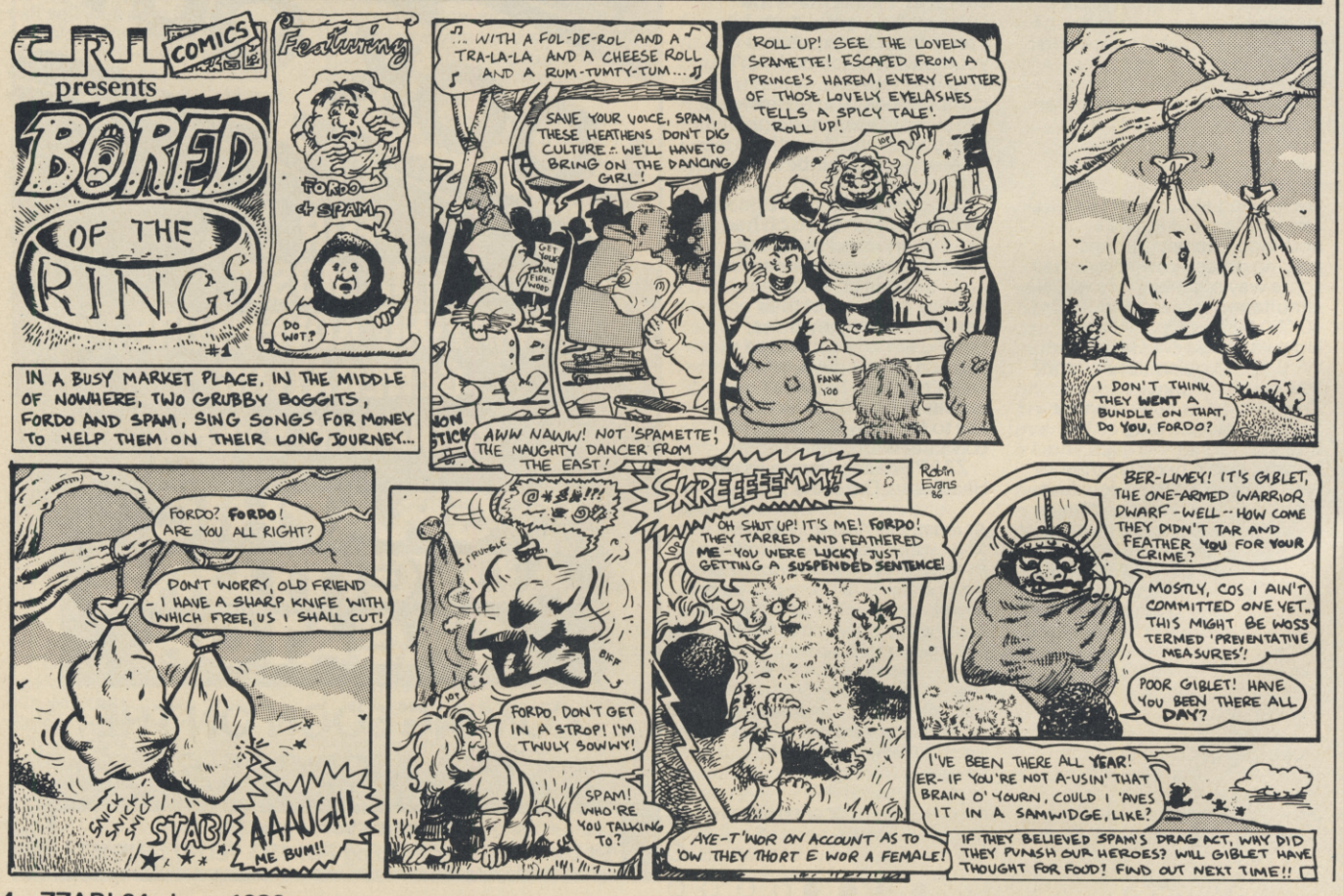
Dear ZZAP!
Further to my letter of 27th February referring to *Past Finder* being available in cartridge form on the Amstrad, I did of course mean Atari. Sorry!
**Mrs A Nicholson, Witham, Essex**

*Thank you for clearing up this matter so promptly, Mrs Nicholson. It's been worrying us all half to death.*
**LM**

**So, as the Emperor said in 'Amadeus', there it is. I feel like I've been through a Mangram mangle, and I thought I was the best answerer of letters ever. Just goes to show. However, if anyone has any beefs about ZZAP! — send them elsewhere! You know the address . . . okay, okay, I give in, ZZAP RRAP is for airing any views you have on the Commodore scene, write to ZZAP RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. See you next month — you can tell me all about the Commodore Show.**

I WISH SOMEONE WOULD BRIBE THING TO GO AWAY!

WHO, ME?!



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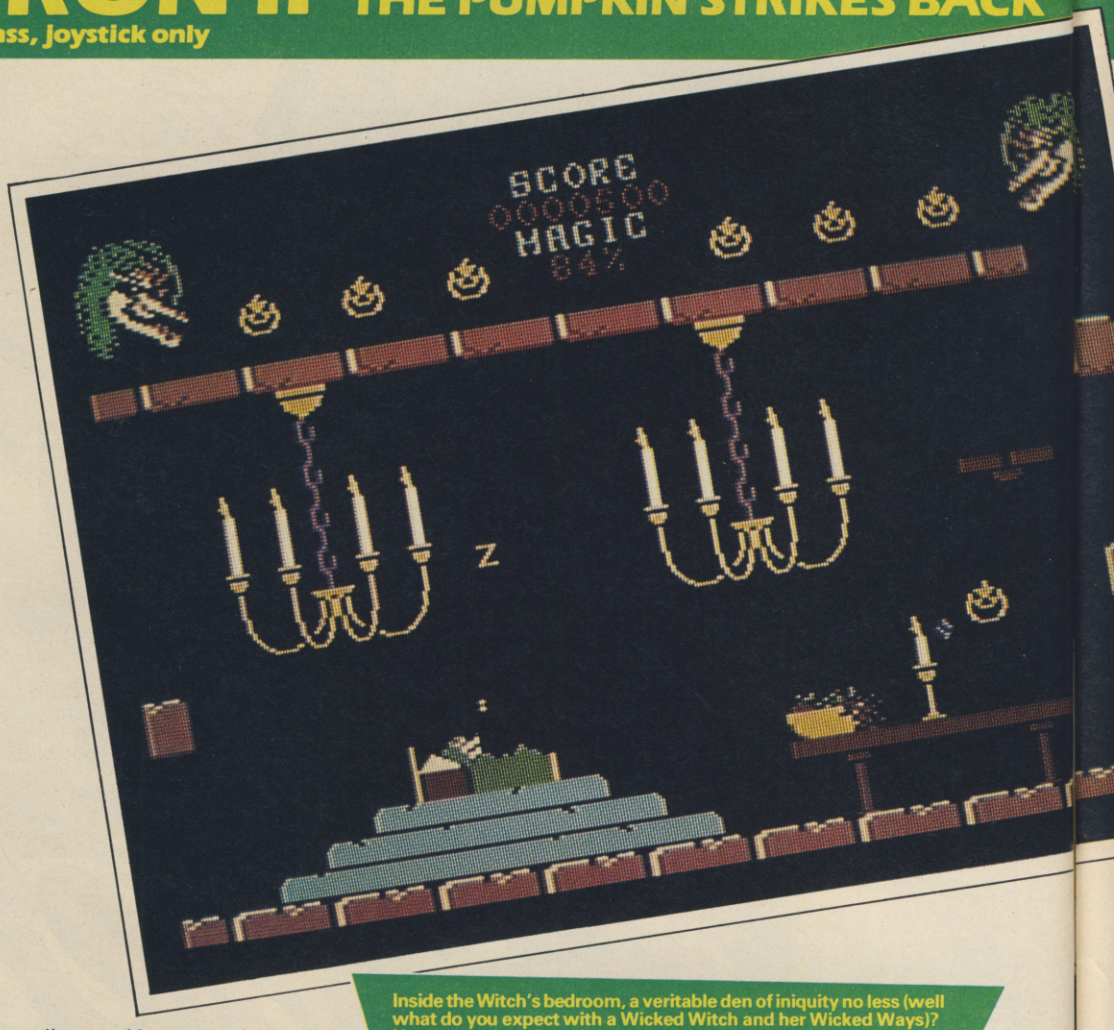
# CAULDRON II

## THE PUMPKIN STRIKES BACK

**Palace Software, £8.99 cass, Joystick only**




Inside the Witch's bedroom, a veritable den of iniquity no less (well what do you expect with a Wicked Witch and her Wicked Ways)? However, what she's doing here is harmlessly getting her beauty sleep — boy does she need it.

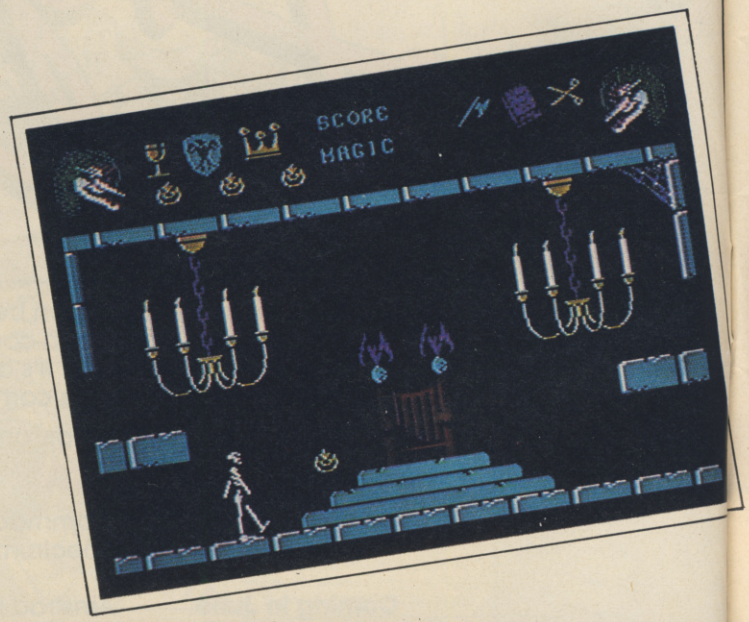
Remember the old hag from *Cauldron*? In those days she was quite a nice old dear, not like the horrible, bloated Pumpking who ruled the woods. He wasn't very nice. In fact he was down right evil. So evil that he used to put cute little kittens in pickle jars and drop them from high buildings. So evil that he once deprived all the rabbits in the wood of their buckhood just to pass the time. But Witchy-Poo managed to put an end to such wicked cavortings — she gathered six ingredients, made a spell to distract the Pumpking and while he was preoccupied she stole his Golden Broomstick. With the power of the broom she banished the porky vegetable, and all his minions, forever.

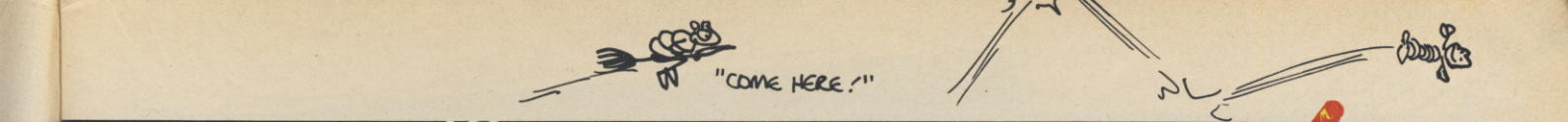
Well, not quite, since there was a survivor — a little pumpkin who guarded the Pumpking prior to his demise. But this friendly little fellow wasn't horrible and evil — well, not much, he just had a rotten childhood, got in with the wrong people and was misunderstood by his social worker. Anyway, once the fatty Pumpking had gone the small pumpkin soon changed and showed everyone what a nice chap he really was by helping lots of grannies across the road, and made people happy by recovering their stolen £5 notes — that sort of thing.

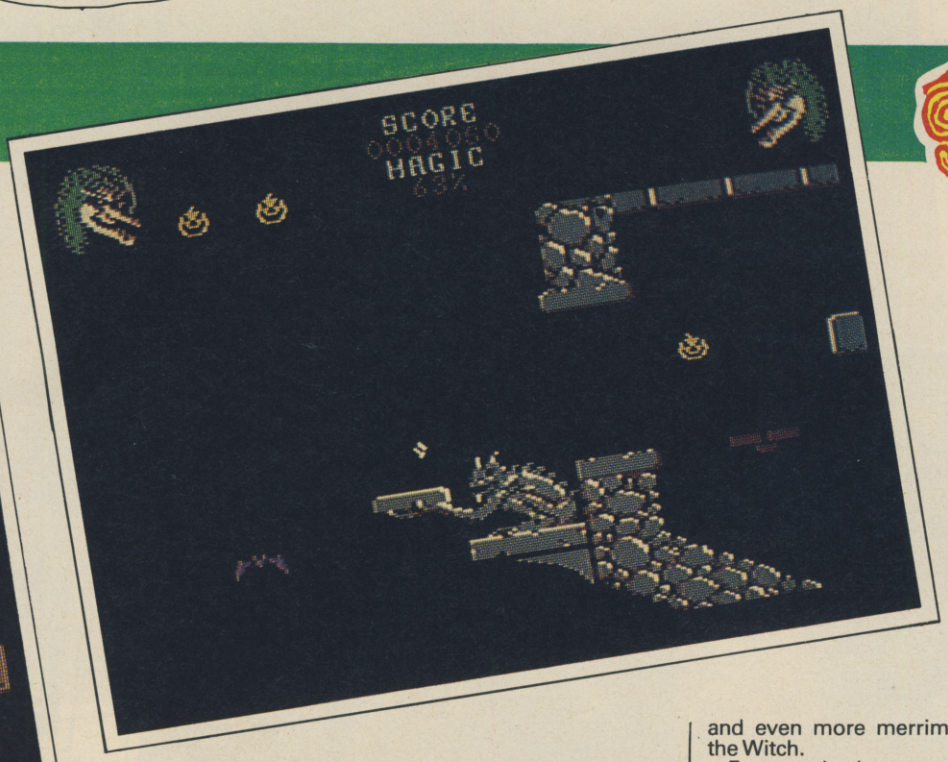
Unfortunately though, the power generated by the Golden Broomstick perverted the goodliness of the Witch and she became warped and evil. She ordered all the little creatures of the forest — you know, the cuddly ones with big dewy eyes that Walt Disney made famous — to build her a huge castle in place of her dilapidated old cottage. She invited a horrible entourage of creatures to move in with her, and nobody dared go near the joint. The Witch's domination was now supreme.

Until one fine sunny day in late April, the little pumpkin learned of the Witch's whereabouts. 'Ha! She doesn't scare me,' he squeaked at the top of his little pumpkin voice, and he decided there and then to put an end to the oppression, and show everybody what a jolly nice

*There's certainly a glut of excellent arcade adventures this month, so it's a case of making your mind up about which one to buy. This one is very good indeed with a highly novel control method as you boing about the Witch's castle. Like its predecessor it's a very difficult game which proves to be immensely tricky to solve. This difficulty doesn't detract from the game though, and the whole experience is very enjoyable, though frustrating. The graphics are brilliant with lots of nasty characters trolling about the place, and the sound effects are also great.*







Cauldron II *is cool. It is a well thought out and polished game, and a great deal of care and attention has obviously gone into it. The title sequence is neat, as is the title screen music (even though it is quite short), and the whole thing creates a film-like atmosphere. The game itself is great fun to play, although it is very hard, and it will take a long time to solve. Cosmetically,* Cauldron II *is beautiful. It contains some superb background graphics, and the sprites are delightfully defined and animated. I especially like the way the pumpkin bounds about the place with a manic grin spread across his 'face'.* Cauldron II *looks good, sounds good, and plays even better. Miss it and you'll regret it.*

pumpkin he really was. So, off to the Witch's castle he sproinged. Sproing, sproing, sproing.

The Hag's abode is a large castle consisting of 128 rooms, all filled with horrible things out to do damage to our edible hero. The game is viewed and played in flip screen fashion as the pumpkin moves from one location to another. The pumpkin has a novel method of locomotion — he bounces! He can perform three different heights of bounce: little sproingy ones, middle size boings and huge great seven league spadoings. Normally he sproings though, but pressing the fire button causes him first to boing then spadoing, useful for negotiating some of the chasms and nasties around the castle.

The castle's decor is pretty questionable — but then what do you expect with such a vile and evil despot ruling it? — and there are several pieces of furniture and masonry to negotiate. There are also plenty of nasties to avoid, or shoot, such as goose-stepping skeletons, hunchbacks with large clubs, floating spikey balls, hammers, mice, knives, spiders and grasping hands. If any of these creatures hits our effervescent friend he loses energy (shown as 'magic' at the top of the screen), but touching a spider or skeleton kills him outright, and touching a hand reverses the joystick controls for a few seconds. With each loss of life the Witch cackles mercilessly. Also worth avoiding are the ends of spears, axes and lit candles as touching them results in the loss of a life and even more merriment for the Witch.

Fortunately there are energy spots scattered about the castle, and these restore the pumpkin's energy when collected. They also give the heroic veggie the ability to fire bursts of energy at the marauding baddies, but at the expense of depleting his magic by one unit. Adorning the exterior of the castle are Gargoyles (not the ones who write games in Dudley) holding stone platters. If the little fella bounces onto a tray to collect an object and doesn't bounce back quickly enough, the gargoyle tips him off and he plummets to the forest below. Fortunately it doesn't cost him a life, just some energy.

The game starts at one of four locations, but no matter where the pumpkin starts he can only complete his task by collecting seven different objects. Dotted around the castle are six items: a book of spells, a goblet, a crown, an axe, a shield and a pair of scissors. These give respectively the ability to complete the game, immunity from the marauding hands, immunity from the nasty guarding the Witch, the ability to open doors, defence against skeletons and finally the ability to cut the Witch's hair. When all of these things are in the pupkin's possession, along with the lock of Witch's hair, he can go down to the bowels of the castle and dump everything in the cauldron found there. Doing so will break her evil spell and everyone can live happily ever after — how nice.

*Palace Software's latest is immediately playable and it's mainly due to the really neat control method of the pumpkin. Bouncing and boinging all over the place is great fun, and though it's a little awkward at first quite a large amount of fine control is possible after a bit of practise. The game itself is very good, offering a fair amount of challenge even to the better game players. Graphically everything's tickety boo and very pretty in places. The music is also of a pleasant quality, as are the sound effects.* Cauldron II *is worth a look at next time you're down the computer shop wondering what to buy — I'm sure you'll be impressed.*

**Presentation 90%**
Nice control method, great attract sequence and attractive inlay.

**Graphics 96%**
Wonderful representation of the castle, with lots of well drawn and animated nasties to be seen.

**Sound 96%**
Short, but neat tune on the title screen, and superlative sound effects.

**Hookability 94%**
Highly addictive from the very first boing.

**Lastability 93%**
A difficult, but enthralling game which requires lots of perseverance to complete.

**Value For Money 94%**
A quid cheaper than most games, and it's ever so good.

**Overall 94%**
Should appear very high on the arcade adventurer's 'must have' list.

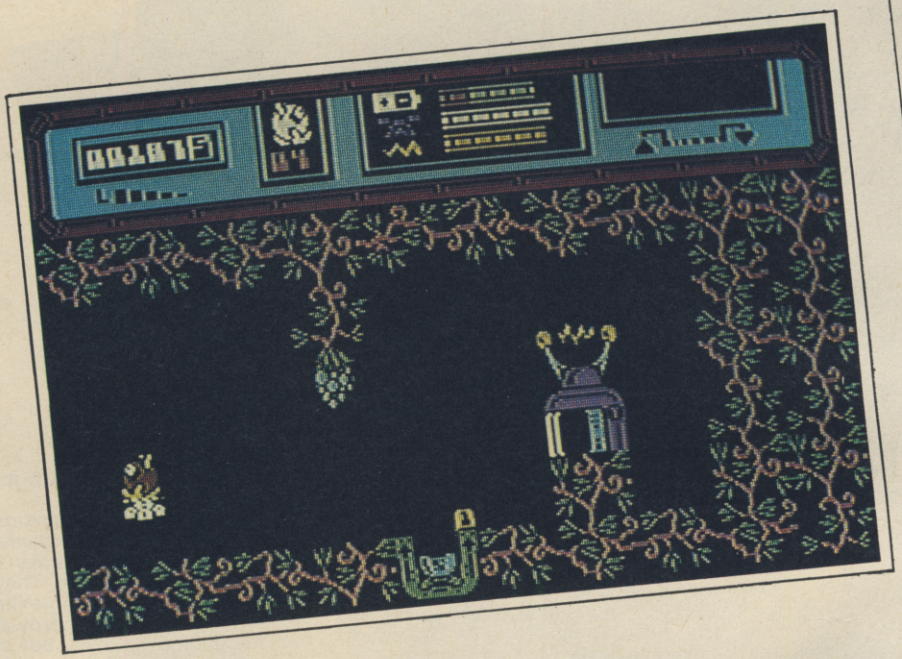
# STARQUAKE

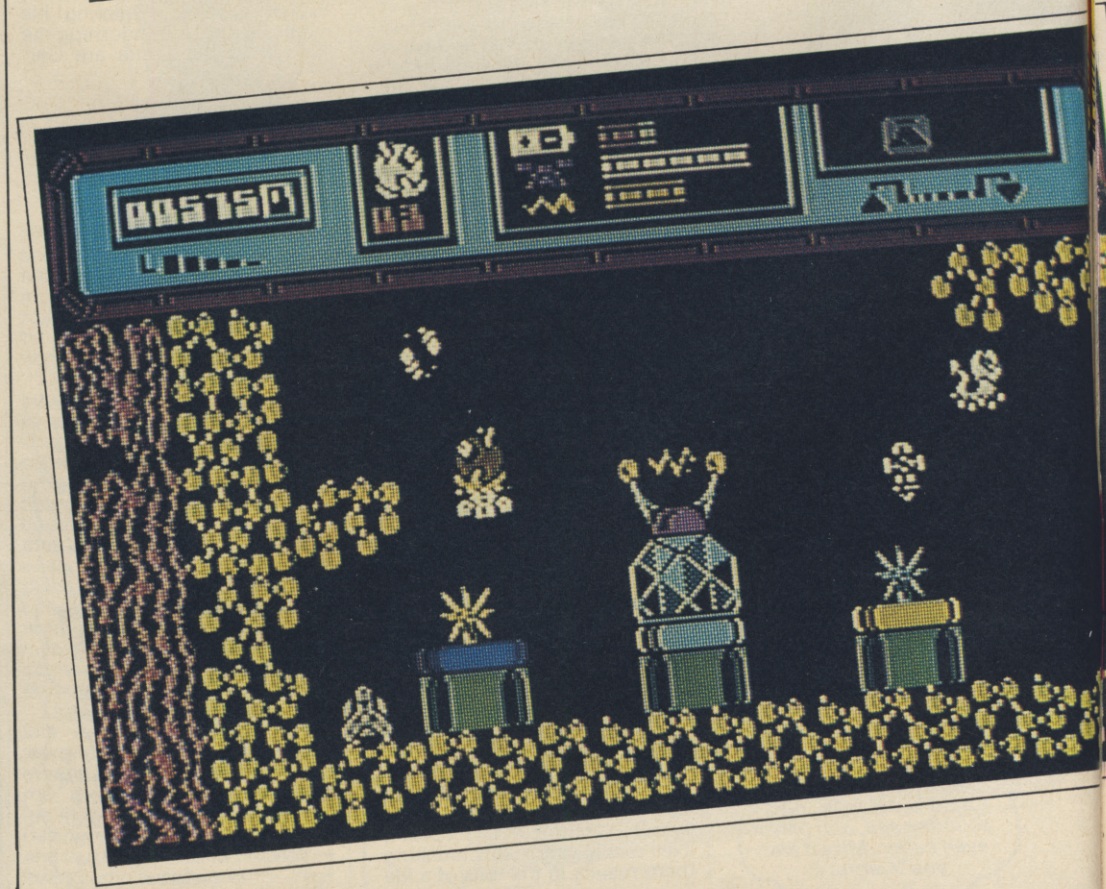
**Bubble Bus, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys**

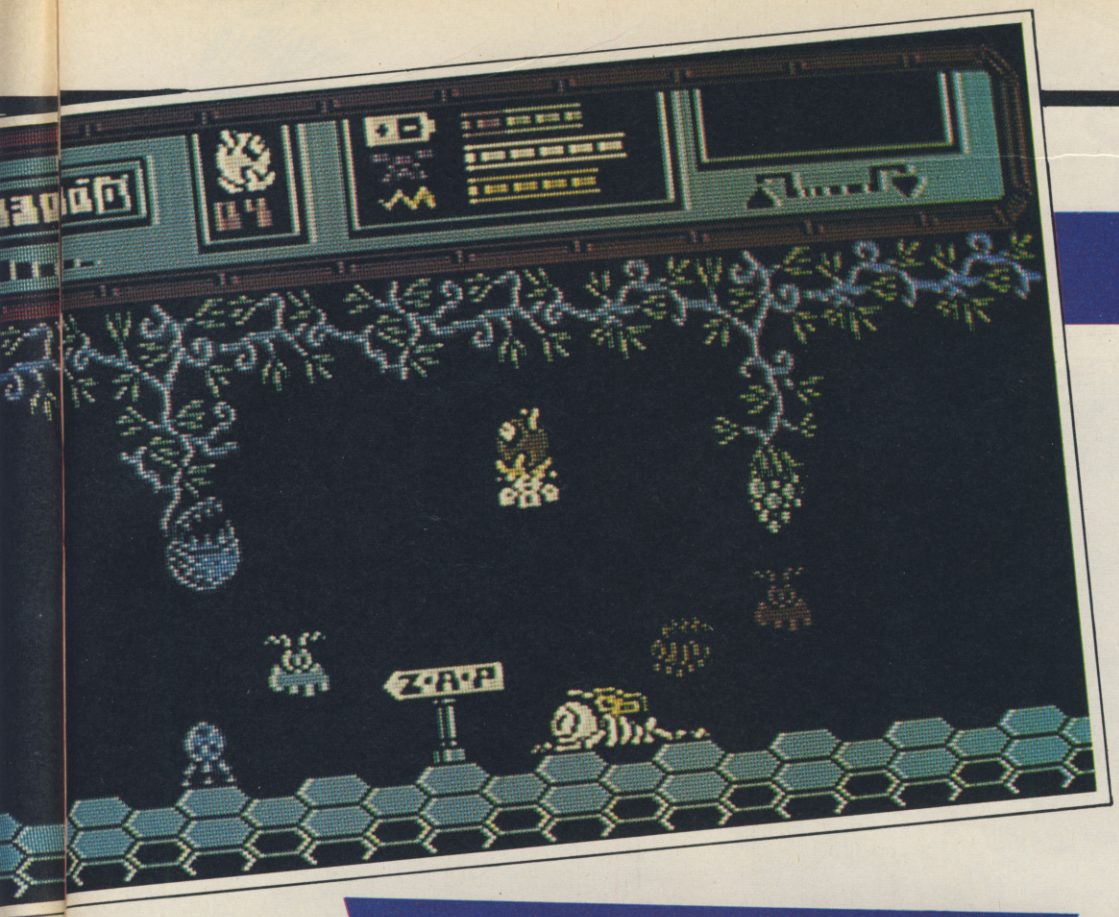
Well knock me down with half a pound of pre-quark, some highly unstable planet has just emerged out of a black hole and is in ever so severe danger of going 'blam'. Not so bad you may think, one planet within an infinite universe going 'blam' is no real loss. This is true, but because of the unstable little worldlet's location such a 'blam' would trigger of an explosion so huge that there wouldn't be any universe to live in any more. Obviously this is not a desirable state of affairs so a plan is hatched. Unfortunately this plan involves a hero flying off to the asteroid and stabilising its core. Heroes are not stupid and all of them realised that this mission would mean ceratin death and no more chat show appearances. So they all declined. This left BLOB — a **B**io-**L**ogically **O**perated **B**eing. He's not very able but is stupid enough to have the greatest enthusiasm for the mission.

Giving back a world its stability is not an easy thing at all, and to do so a number of objects have to placed within the world's core, filling a gap that is threatening to implode. It needs a mid-morning snack. Little wonder though that the planet is so potentially explosive since it's a bit of a mess, beriddled with caverns, the whole structure is rather tenuous. After a bit

*Not only is* Starquake *one of the best arcade adventures to play, it is also one of the nicest to look at. The backgrounds are very pretty indeed, and the sprites are beautifully drawn and animated — especially the hero, BLOB, who must be the cutest computer game character to hit the small screen yet. Anyway,* Starquake *is neat — one of the most playable and absorbing games of its type, and certainly worthy of any arcade adventurers time and money.*








Copies of ZZAP! this way — the poor astronaut at the bottom of the screen didn't quite make it. It looks as though BLOB in the centre of the screen, happily seated at the controls of his flying baking tin, will make it.

of a messy landing (crash is probably a better word) BLOB must traverse and explore the asteroid's interior to find the correct core filling objects.

It's an awfully large asteroid and exploration on foot would be far from easy. Luckily the remnants of some ancient civilisation abound and these can be put to BLOB's use. The main help is a teleportion system, seen by the nodes that are scattered around the environment. Each booth has its own codeword of which BLOB is informed when he enters it, while within the booth typing the code of any other node will beam blob there in the flash of a frame flyback. Another mode of transport are the flying baking tins parked around the joint, though a speedier form of transport than walking, sitting on a tin tray makes it impossible to pick objects up.

BLOB and his universe are seen as a series of screens. To flip from one to another BLOB must move off an edge and another jaunts into view. Slower than a baking tin, on foot BLOB's still quite a fast mover and can zip left and right over the ledges and rocks in the asteroid. He is susceptible to gravity though, and trolling off a ledge edge has its usual effect — he accelerates downwards till some terra firma rushes up to greet his feet. Falling can be halted with a quick downwards motion on the joystick that should be in your hand. A platform will instantly appear under BLOB's padlike tootsies, and seconds later it decays. Repeated down pulling raises blob higher and higher as more and more platforms ap pear under him. Unluckily infinite platforms are not in your possession and a meter at the top indicates how many ledges are left. Two other meters also sit here, one showing a constantly sapped energy and the other a ray gun status. Energy is important as a zero amount of this is like nature's way of telling you to slow down, ie death. Extra energy, platforms and ray gun bullets can be picked up by passing over supplies of such substances which may be found lying about the place.

Hassling and harrasing the poor BLOB are a number of mindless nasties, a touch from these and energy depreciates, fire the gun at them and they die.

The asteroid's scenery is also quite interesting and in places deadly. Luna undergrowth is worth avoiding as death results. Some very narrow gaps that BLOB must travel through are booby trapped as well with powerful field generators that sometimes spark the gap. Get caught mid-spark and BLOB gets blipped. Among the other artifacts knocking around of particular interest are the Cheops pyramids. These mysterious items allow objects to be traded if the right code parts are possessed. To pick up an object just position the person over the object and push up. There is a buffer area along the score line showing any of the objects held.

To finish the game the core centre must be found, not an easy job considering the hundreds of screens to be explored, and the various items that must be fitted. Fail and die — this seems a pretty good reason to have a game.

*After quite a lull Bubble Bus are back with yet another extremely nice arcade adventure in a similar style to the old Ultimate Spectrum product.* Starquake *is very neat indeed, it's cleverly thought out, fun to play and pretty to look at. BLOB, the main character, is delighfully animated and comfortable to control. Despite having a totally massive amount of screens (512) they do retain some sort of unrepetiveness. Different zones of the asteroid have different types of scenery, ranging from flowers to rocks. It is very pretty indeed. The large amount of little features dotted around BLOB's universe keep things interesting as well. All arcade adventurers should possess this product and any respecting games player should at least take a look.*

*This is an exceptionally jolly arcade adventure which stars a character with character — BLOB. There are plenty of locations and the scenery is very pretty, colourful and varied. The alien thingies that float about the place are small but detailed and nicely animated if you take the trouble to look at them. All the little features in the game are really brilliant — elevators, teletransporters traps and BLOB's methods of transport, and all make the game fun to play. There are two marvellous arcade adventures out this month so unless you can afford both you'll have to make up your own mind about which one to buy.*

**Presentation 92%**
Great title screens plus all the nobs and bits that change games from good to great.

**Graphics 94%**
Clever clever use of hi-res mode that's most colourful indeed.

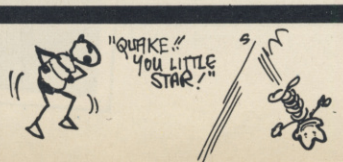
**Sound 80%**
Not the nicest tunes yet but some very pleasant sound FX.

**Hookability 91%**
Easily accesible and immediate fun to play.

**Lastability 93%**
A whole of bunch of screens to keep the hardened gamester in check but not too hard to ever become frustratingly boring.

**Value for Money 93%**
Well worth the less than normal amount of money usually asked for what's a very good game.

**Overall 93%**
This **Star** release will make the opposition **Quake** — *(Groan, thank you GL! —Ed).*



# SIZZLER

# INTERNATIONAL KAR

**System 3, £6.50 cass, £10.99 disk, joystick only**

The South Bank Show was never like this — the International Karate bully boys enjoy a good martial bash-up outside Parliament.

Aaaaiiii! Crack! Ouch! *International Karate* is another variation on the martial arts theme that gives you the chance to rearrange features, break shins, and generally abuse an opponent to the full.

You take control of a white robed karate bully boy with thirteen different moves at your disposal. Kicks, punches and somersaults are all accessible via the joystick — pushing it in one of the eight directions, either with or without the fire button depressed, results in the execution of a manoeuvre.

There are two playing options, allowing you to fight either a computer opponent or a human one. The single player game has you playing as many 30-second bouts as you can survive, with the objective of beating up and outscoring the computer controlled fighter. Depending on how well a move is executed, a half or full point is awarded and the first person to score two full points is declared the winner. Any time remaining is converted into bonus points. By winning two bouts you are promoted to a higher belt and set against a more intelligent and violent opponent, and a different backdrop (there are four different ones on each side of the cassette). However, if the computer player scores two points, the match and game is over.

If the timer reaches zero before a fighter scores two points then the chap with the highest score for that bout is declared the winner. Between rounds there is a bonus screen which further tests your skills and gives you the opportunity to earn more points. The first is a tile breaking contest where you have to destroy as many tiles as you can with your head, and the second puts your reflexes to the test as you try to dodge the various spears and other deadly objects slung at you by the computer.

The two player game is played over three 90-second bouts. Twelve dots, six red and six white, are displayed at the top of the screen. When one player successfully overcomes the other, one of the loser's dots is turned into the victor's colour. The winner is the first player to turn all twelve dots to their own colour. After three bouts the victor goes on to play a computer opponent.

*To be honest, I thought that playing yet another variation on the martial arts theme was going to be something of a chore. I've played, and become wholly bored of* Exploding Fist, *but I found that playing* International Karate *was far from dull and I haven't enjoyed myself so much in ages. It's far better than* Fist *in every way — the graphics are smoother and faster, and make* Fist's *look crude in comparison. The music is amazing and the sound effects are great — both complement the game well.* International Karate *is playable and addictive, and the pace is fast and furious. At the price no self respecting fan of the genre should overlook it.*

# RATE

Another example of the jolly background screens — having beaten up the Acropolis, the contestants turn on each other.

*Comparisons to* Way of the Exploding Fist *are quite frankly unavoidable.* International Karate *is a bit similar, but it is a damn sight better. The action is very fast indeed and it is more fun to play than it's comtemporaries. As fighting games go this seems to be the best and at the price anyone into synthetic violence shouldn't miss it. What really surprised me about* IK *though was the Rob Hubbard sound track. It is really good, much better than the all of his recent work. Hopefully this marks a bit of a change.* IK *is definitely System 3's best product for the 64 to date, and is worth a look at as it's really rather good.*

*Although this type of game has appeared before, the gameplay has tended to be somewhat flawed, allowing players to demolish top opponents time after time by using the same move. This one is different — the intelligence of the computer player and the speed at which the game is played makes it a a lot harder and more challenging to play than any other fighting game. Graphically the game is excellent, with well animated characters moving speedily across the varied backdrops, which are also very good. All the way through the game an atmospheric and very long Rob Hubbard piece clanks away, and there are also some good sound effects. If you want the best fighting game available and have six and a half quid spare then go out and get this.*

**Presentation 94%**
One or two player options, excellent use of joystick and many 'cute' touches throughout.

**Graphics 91%**
Extremely well animated figures and four nice backdrops per side.

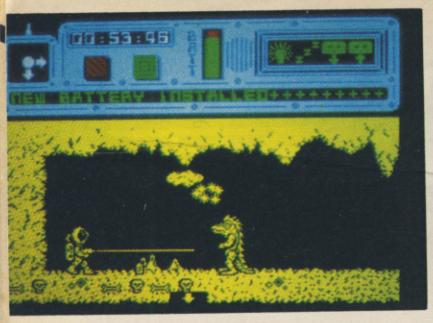
**Sound 96%**
One of Hubbard's best tunes fits the bill perfectly — and there are also some great sound effects.

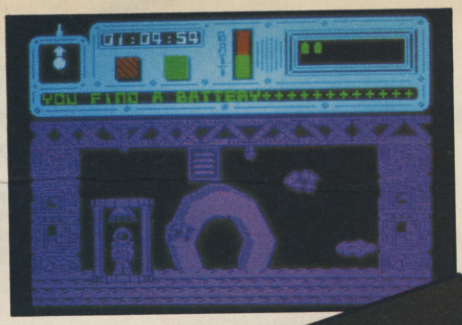
**Hookability 93%**
Very playable and easy to get into.

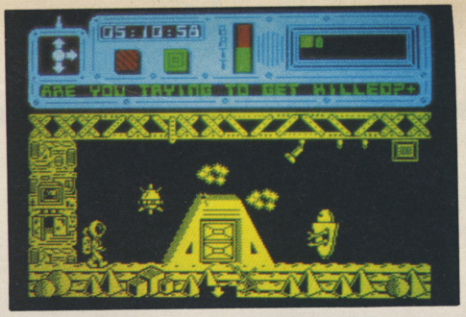
**Lastability 90%**
The high degree of difficulty makes the game tough to master. The two player option is good fun too.

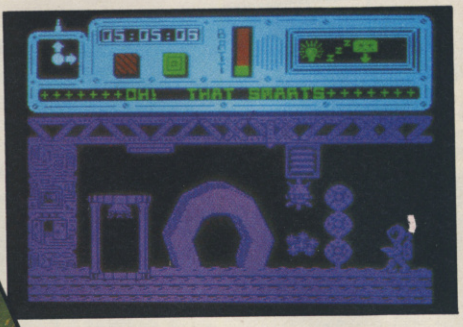
**Value For Money 95%**
Great quality at a cheap price.

**Overall 91%**
The best thump em up we've seen and played yet.









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AFTER THE EGG COMES . . .

# CORE

NCY TRANSMISSION . . . EMERGENCY . . . EMERGENCY TRANSMISSION . . . EMERGENCY . . . EMERGENCY TRANSMIS

Distress signals received from Eroc I suggest all human life threatened . . .
Expect to find terminal situation . . . Prepare accordingly . . .

From A 'n' F comes CORE; teleport into this fully animated, icon-driven adventure and explore over one thousand full-screen locations. Will you find the pieces of the scattered brain and put it back together before yours falls apart?

*In case of difficulty, Core can be obtained from Argus Press Software Ltd., Greenwood House, Dewhurst Street, Darwen, Lancs. BB3 2EN.*

# PING PONG

**Imagine, £8.95 cass, joystick only**

Do you remember when a revolutionary new form of entertainment — a machine called *Pong* — first appeared in amusement arcades everywhere and everyone said: 'Golly, how thrilling — a revolutionary new form of entertainment!'? Do you remember when Binatone turned it into a 'home arcade console' and everyone said: 'Golly, how thrilling — an arcade game in our very own place of residence!'? No? Well, since then there's not been much heard of *Pong*. Until now that is, for Imagine have taken the theme, turned it from a horizontal game to a near vertical one and added an extra dimension with 3D graphics.

*Ping Pong* is played according to the rules of table tennis, the winner being the first to score eleven points. Only one player can play against one of five different computer opponents — there is no two player option. Level one is a bit docile and bats the ball slowly around the table, but level five is a crazed pongicidal maniac who shows no mercy.

The game is always viewed and played from the base line with your bat positioned about a quarter of the way up the screen (get your eyes and position them above one of the screen shot if you're confused). The score and other relevant information, whether the ball is in or out, for example, is displayed either side of the table. Crowds flank each side of the screen and play a small part in the game — the ones on the right cheer the computer and the ones on the left cheer you.

Your bat automatically follows the ball so it's up to you to time the return. Pressing the fire button drives the ball back, whilst pushing down on the joystick 'cuts' it and pushing up executes a smash. Moving the joystick left or right moves the bat either to the forehand or backhand position and depending upon how early or late you hit the ball it veers either right or left.

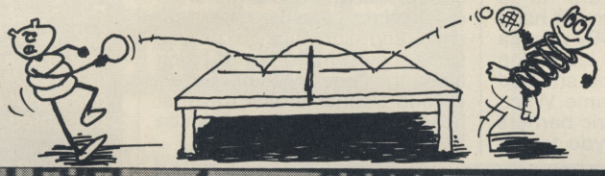
Serves are performed by pushing up on the joystick to throw the ball in the air and then pressing the fire button to drive it. After every five points the serving changes hands. If the scoring is tied at ten points a piece then the tie-break comes into effect. In this situation the first player to either go ahead by two points or reach fifteen points (whichever comes first) is declared the outright winner.

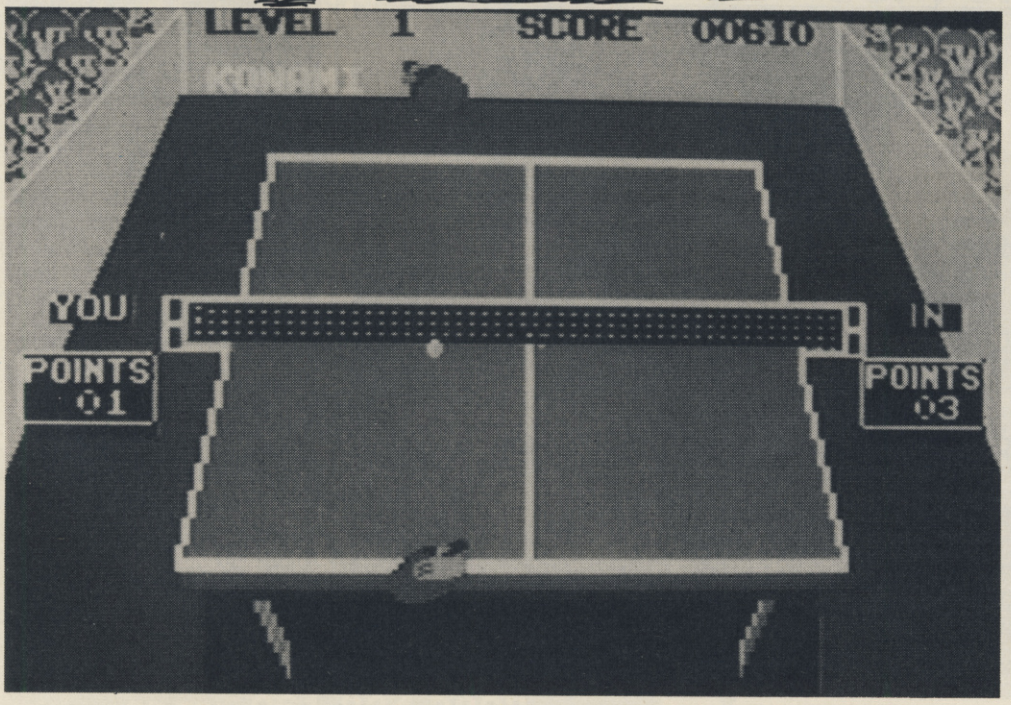
Ten points are awarded for a shot and when an opponent is beaten a bonus is awarded. If your score is high enough at the end of a game your initials can be entered in the highscore table.

*After playing* Ping Pong *on the Amstrad and Spectrum I expected great things of the 64 version, but unfortunately it isn't anything special. There is a lack of variety in shots and it seemed to make little difference whether a shot was played early or late. This makes the game rather dull to play. The graphics are OK, but I would have expected a jolly title screen tune or something as the Spectrum version had an amazing little ditty. If you're a table tennis nut then I suppose this is a good buy, but there are better games than this.*

Ping Pong *is initially quite good fun, but it soon proves boring to play due to its simplistic nature. Although there is a reasonable variety of shots available, the computer player doesn't seem to respond that differently to them. The graphics and sound are OK, but it would have been nice to have had some original Martin Galway music on the title screen.* Ping Pong *is an improvement over the original* Pong *and more enjoyable to play, but not much.*

*Yet another case of a potentially good game ruined by the restrictions imposed by the licensing deal. This is a conversion of the arcade game* Ping Pong *and a very close conversion it is too. Unfortunately, arcade* Ping Pong *isn't very good in the first place. In a word, or a couple of words, it's dull. The graphics and sound are on a par with the game, ie, dull. I couldn't honestly recommend buying* Ping Pong, *but it may be worth a look at if table tennis is what you enjoy most.*






**Presentation 83%**
Five levels of play, a highscore table and a few cute touches.

**Graphics 61%**
Lacking, but adequate.

**Sound 58%**
A couple of reasonable jingles and noises, but little else.

**Hookability 78%**
Very simple to get into and play . . .

**Lastability 65%**
. . . but perhaps a little too simple.

**Value For Money 65%**
Below average price, but then so it should be.

**Overall 66%**
The best table tennis game on the Commodore, but then it's the only one.

# V

**Ocean, £8.95 cass, Joystick only**

Once upon a time a large fleet of very big spaceships came to Earth and got everyone wondering what the aliens within looked like. It turned out that the occupants were just like human beings and they promised all sorts of great things to benefit mankind. Then, one rainy day in July, a true blue American hero called Donovan sneaked into a spaceship to find out exactly what the aliens did in their spare time. Imagine how he felt when he saw what he thought was a beautiful young woman gobbling a live guinea pig, followed by a whole hamster! Gross to say the least. But before Donovan could do anything he was discovered by a guard, and in the midst of the ensuing fight he accidentally ripped off the guard's face to reveal a lizard's head below! Oh dear, the alien visitors were lizards in disguise and they had come to Earth to eat lots of humans and steal all the water.

A resistance was formed and they quickly drew up a plan to destroy the evil invaders. Donovan was smuggled aboard the visitor's mothership armed only with a laser gun and a stolen Comniputer. His task was simple: plant five bombs at key points around the ship and detonate them to blow both craft and occupants to kingdom come. All well and good, but if he doesn't escape in time . . .

You take control of Donovan just after he's boarded the ship. There are five different sections to a ship and each has many levels. The aliens have no imagination when it comes to interior design, so the various levels look rather similar and it's all to easy to get lost. Thankfully, only two levels of the ship are shown on screen at one time. Donovan can move either left or right along a corridor and the screen scrolls with him as he moves. Green mat transporters line the floors and are used to move up or down a level. By standing on a mat and pulling down on the joystick Donovan dissolves and reforms on the level above or below.

The mission starts in the landing bay and instantly presents a problem — both exits are impassable due to the presence of electric barriers. This is where the Comniputer comes in useful. It is displayed at the bottom of the screen and pulling down on the joystick brings it into action. There are twelve functions available and each is displayed as an icon. The problem is that all of icons are in lizardspiel, so it's up to you to decide which icon does what. One of the icons activates a codebreaking sequence and this is used to turn off the barriers. A six character code, consisting of a jumble of lizard letters, appears in a window in the bottom left hand corner of the screen. By using a set of lizard letter icons the characters have to be shuffled until they are all the same. When they match the electric barriers disappear, allowing you to run into the corridor. The Comniputer can also be used to find out your current location and the locations of the key points.

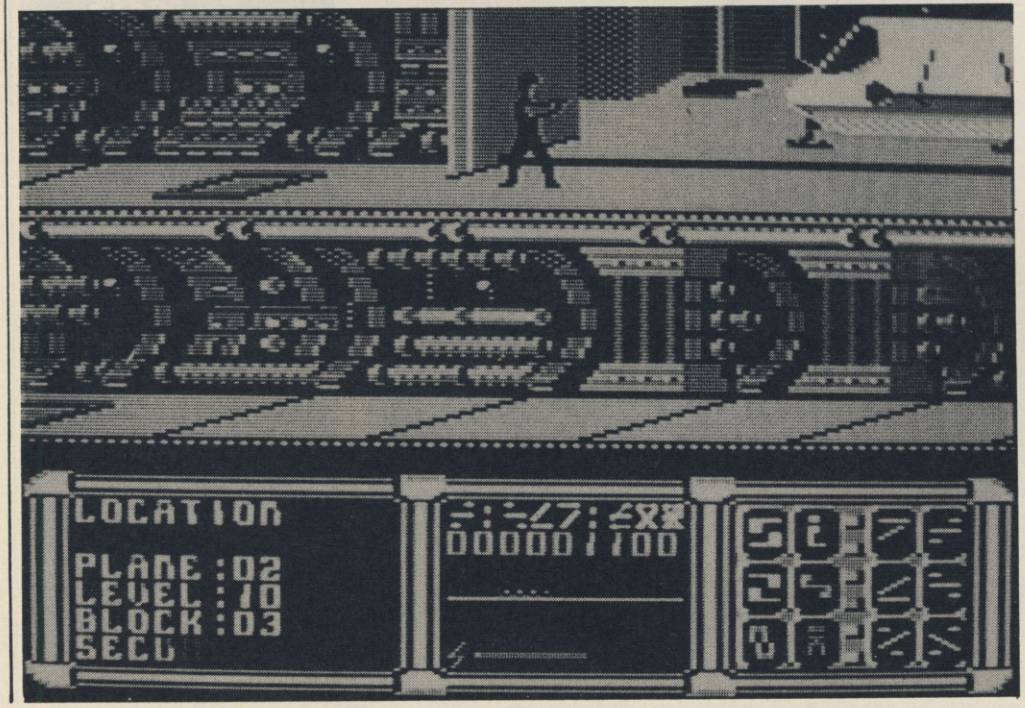
On the walls of some of the levels are charge terminals for recharging your laser gun. By standing in front of a terminal and pulling down on the joystick the gun recharges. A red bar at the bottom of screen indicates how much charge is in the gun.

As strange as it may seem there are no lizards roaming the ship, but they have left behind four different types of droid: maintenance, cleaner, surveillance and security. If Donovan touches any of them it strains his heart, and if he spends too long in their presence he dies of a heart attack. Although Donovan is armed he can only shoot at shoulder height and is therefore defenceless against maintenance and surveillance droids, since they trundle out of reach along the floor or ceiling. Security and cleaner droids travel at head height though, and can be blasted with ease.

The other method of destroying of the robots is to find and assemble the formula for Red Dust. The parts of the formula are found in the various laboratories dotted around the ship, but if the parts are found and the dust is made and dissipated then lots of visitors get killed and the robot pursuit is slowed down. When Donovan has planted and primed all the bombs he can make his way back to the landing bay and escape before everything goes up in smoke.

*At first glimpse V looks really impressive with the interior of the ship drawn quite nicely. However, once you start moving about it becomes apparent that the ship is all the same with no variation in the graphics at all. The sound has no variation either and throbs annoyingly throughout the game. The instructions are appalling and tell you nothing about the game, making it very difficult to get into. I suppose V will sell well purely on the strength of the telly series, but as games go it's well below par.*

*I didn't like the film, I didn't like the TV series, I'm happily indifferent to the books having not read any of them and I hate the computer game. Yes, it's V we're talking about and I'm afraid it didn't appeal to me in the slightest. The graphics are fairly pleasant, but after a bit of roaming around it becomes obvious that they are as varied as the Sahara desert. The game itself, in look, feel and play, seems to be an attempt at a poor man's* Impossible Mission. *Is it coincidence that* V *authors, Softstone, also wrote the Spectrum and Amstrad* Impossible Mission *conversions? Overall a disappointing game that I could never recommend to anyone, even if they were manic* V *groupies.*




**Presentation 51%**
Unimaginative title screen and instructions that tell you little about how to play the game, but reasonably presented on screen.

**Graphics 68%**
Backgrounds are quite good, but not varied enough and the sprite are OK.

**Sound 9%**
No music and an annoying drone throughout the game that can't be turned off.

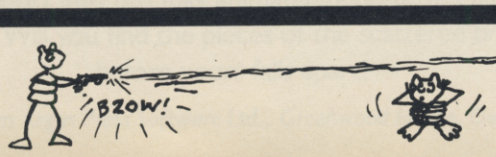
**Hookability 59%**
It's very difficult to get into and the instructions don't help.

**Lastability 41%**
The task set is very tough and it will take ages to complete, that is if you want to keep playing it.

**Value For Money 36%**
There are more interesting things to waste your money on.

**Overall 40%**
Very dull and very disappointing.





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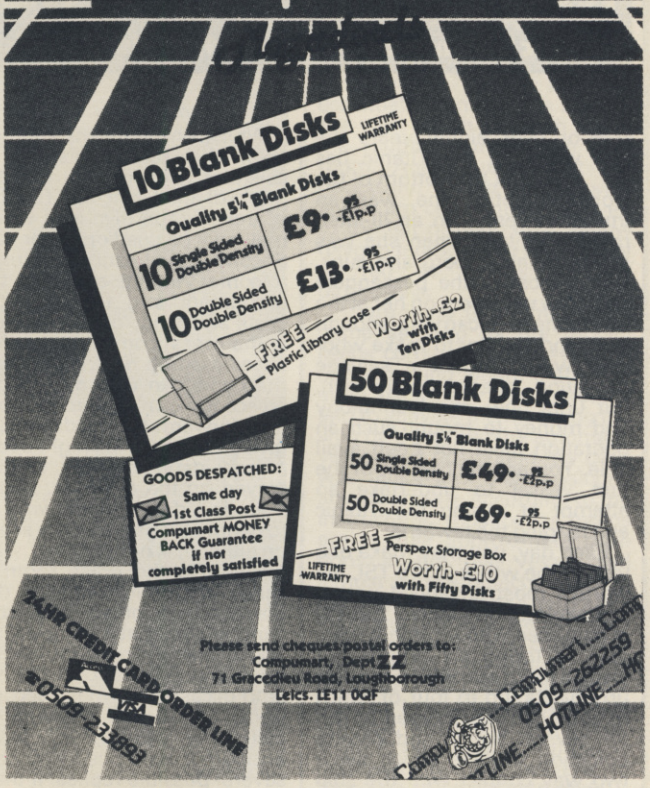




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# TEST

## RAISE THE TITANIC

**Electric Dreams, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys**

For over eighty years the wreck of the Titanic has rested at the bottom of the North Atlantic. She was an immense vessel on an ill-fated maiden voyage when she was struck by an iceberg and sunk, killing most of the passengers and crew who were on her at the time. She was carrying enough gold and jewelry to make whoever would mount a salvage operation phenomenally rich, but until now, the technology and money to mount such an operation have not been avail able. You are the captain of the first vessel to undertake an attempt at raising the Titanic and reaping the rewards.

Each day, you may make one visit to the wreck in the TSI, the world's most advanced undersea exploration device. The TSI is equipped with a camera (capable of taking six photos per visit), a robot arm which can pick up objects (up to four of which may be carried), oxygen to last for several hours, and communication facilties which allow two way contact with the ship for resurfacing or sending details of objects to the laboratories for examination (or even to the accountant so they may be sold). Selling objects and getting good press reports are both essential to help along the finance.

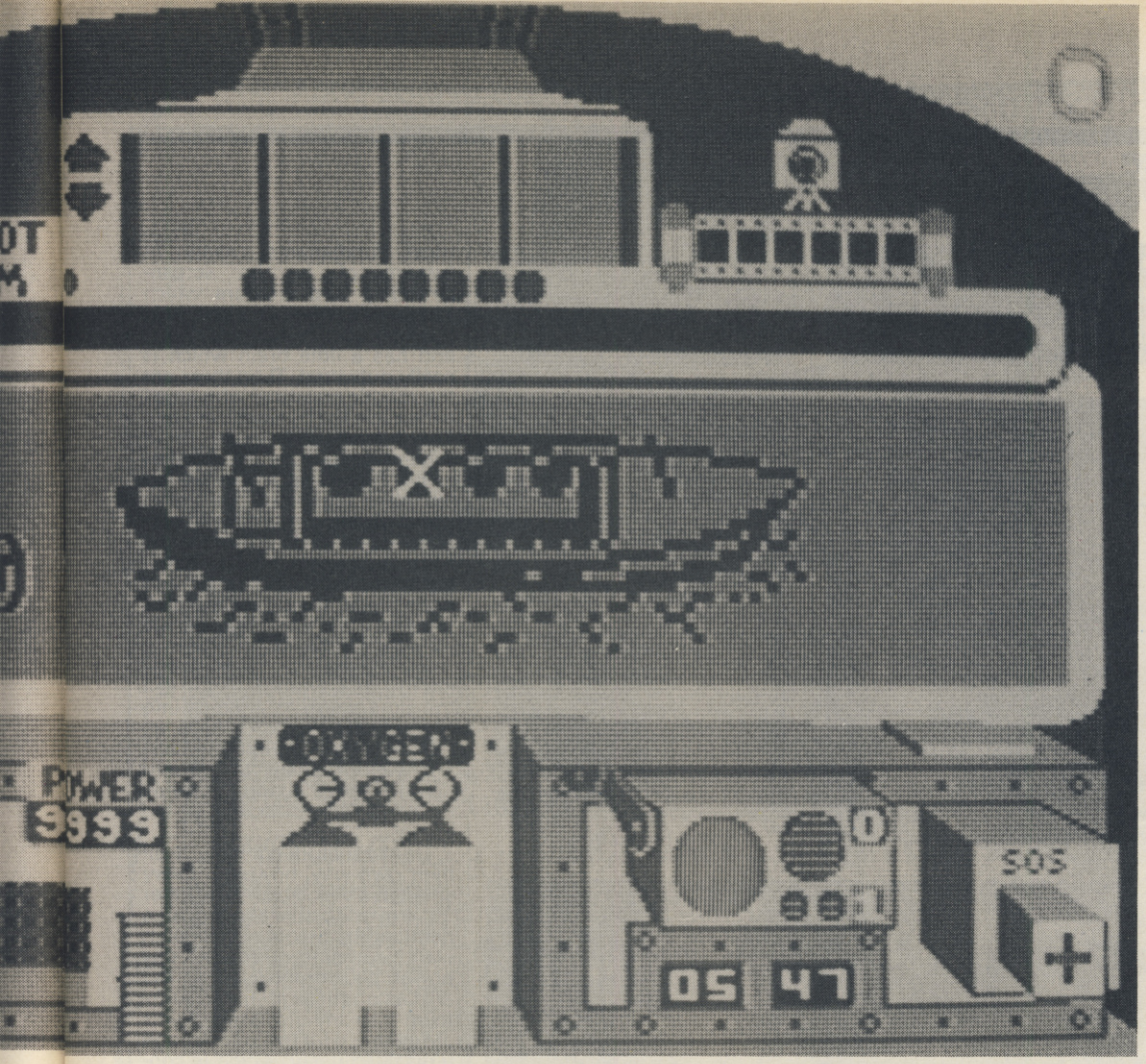
Whilst on board the mothership, the screen displays a calendar (with the current day marked) and five icons. The first of these is the dive icon which may only be used once per day. Second is the finance icon, used to confer with the sponsors, the accountant and to check the costs and funds available. Next is the press icon where conferences may be held throughout the game. An icon depicting a crescent moon is used to move time forwards by one day and to give your crew a full night's rest. A new date will then be displayed on the calendar. Lastly, there is a disk icon allowing up to twenty six games to be saved on either disk or cassette.

When in the press room, a series of monitor screens display the faces of reporters from various international publications. One by one, journalists ask a wide variety of questions (and occasionally make accusations) about your mission. By using the joystick, you select answers to their questions from several possible replies. If there are any photos from the last dive, these may be shown to the press. They may ask to put reporters on board the ship or for an exclusive interview. You are free to deal with such requests as you see fit, but it's important to keep the press reasonably happy.

In the finance room, moving the joystick allows you to select a desk, a telephone or a safe. Selecting the desk reveals how much any necessary repairs cost and how long they take to complete. Continual pressing of the fire button provides information pertaining to how much money is due at the end of the week (from each sponsor). Selecting the safe displays the current bank balance. The way the bank operates means no action is taken on overdrafts until the end of the week, so if enough money is coming in, you may go overdrawn during the week. If the telephone is selected, one of a series of photos is highlighted. Each photo shows the face of one of the sponsors. The joystick is positioned on the photo of the required sponsor and following a press of the fire button, you are either told that the sponsor is unavailable or his face appears on a monitor and he tells you whether or not he will give you any money and if he does, how much.

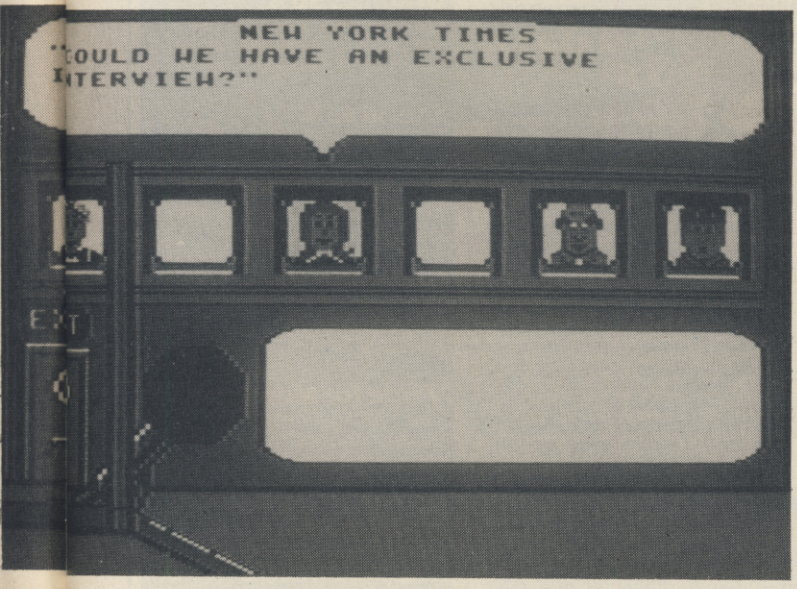
Selecting the dive option takes you to the main part of the game. A screen showing a view of the wreck is displayed along with a cursor. The cursor may be positioned over one of five entry points into the vessel. When the desired entry point has been confirmed, the TSI sinks to that location. One of the most original features of the game is the camera through which you can see your surroundings. A picture similar to that of light intensifier cameras is generated, pixels swirling everywhere. Rooms may then be explored in a fashion similar to that of

*Thinking about it, you could almost sum up Raise the Titanic* as a sort of *Hacker* for fish freaks. However, it would be easy to dismiss this game as nothing remarkable in terms of animated adventuring. This would be a gross error of judgement. The game is well devised, has some very pleasing aesthetics (the enhanced imaging effects are superb) and enough playability and compl exity to keep the hardiest gamers going for some time. The author obviously has a sense of humour as the witty press conferences prove admirably. At one point, a member of the Titanic Historical Society asks you if the spirit of the occasion moves you. The game is a multi-faceted arrangement of good graphics, clever and original plot and gameplay, put together with what appears to be highly competent programming. I have no reservations about recommending you to rush out to buy this game, it's great.




*Mercenary*. If a doorway is darker than the surroundings, it may be entered by centering it on the screen and pressing fire. If it is shown in outline only, entering it should still be possible with precise positioning, but during the course of the review, no-one managed to do this. If the door has a lock on it, then some other means of entry must be found. Another way of moving is possible by watching the colour of up and down arrows on your display. If either light up green, it is possible to go to another deck in that direction by pressing the plus or minus key.

The TSI is fitted with a robot arm. This may be used to pick up certain objects, which are then displayed in the hold. However, objects may be fitted to walls or may just be too heavy to carry. The arm is damaged if an attempt is made to pick up certain objects and remains unusable until the TSI returns for repairs. The arm is useful for more than picking up objects for the hold. Once some objects are being carried, up to two of them may be selected and brought back out on the arm. If the TSI is in the room at which it last entered the wreck, pressing **L** sends the objects back to the lab for examination. Pressing the **£** key sends them to the accountant (who sells them and reports to you in the finance room). Finally, any object in the grip of the arm may be photographed. A camera is displayed at the top right of the screen along with part of a roll of film. A photo is taken by pressing the **F** key upon which the camera flashes and one of the spaces on the roll turns from black to red. Once all six spaces have turned to red, the film has been used up for that dive.



I didn't like the look of this game at first — to be honest, I didn't like the look of the length of the instructions. But, I decided to persevere and I'm glad that I did because Raise the Titanic *turned out to be an enjoyable game to play. The graphics aren't much, although the underwater sequence is very neat indeed, and the music does tend to irritate, but it is an unusual, and a somewhat innovative, approach to a game and one that works quite admirably. I would say that there is plenty of depth to* Raise the Titanic, *if you'll excuse the pun, and that there is certainly enough game to keep you happy for a fair while.*

Other features of the control panel include a sonar screen to keep track relative to buoys launched at your discretion. They are useful for navigation through the rooms but not essential. Then there is a scanner with which you can check the rough nature of the next room. Again, useful but not necessary. Depth and power levels are constantly displayed to the left of two large, yellow oxygen tanks. These turn slowly to red as the air supply diminishes.

There is no time limit to the game so long as the money keeps coming in. The eventual aim is to find where eight flotation bags have been situated and to activate them, raising the ship by doing so. The automatic vessel that positioned the bags was faulty and their positions are not known. According to the instructions, most of the rooms are in their approximate positions in the real vessel and almost all the objects were on the ship's manifest. There are a lot of puzzles to solve and people to please before success is likely. *Raise the Titanic* tries to be authentic in approach and a note in the instructions points out that whilst this game may seem in bad taste to some, it is dedicated to the bravery of those who died in the tragedy.

**Presentation 80%**
The icon driven system is very easy to use.

**Graphics 84%**
Although most of the graphics are of reasonable standard, credit must be given for the effective, original and clever image enhancement effects which also add to the atmosphere of the game.

**Sound 73%**
Wierd music, decent effects and LCP type warbling from other characters, make this department reasonably well catered for.

**Hookability 67%**
This area suffers more than most because of the unusual and subtle nature of play.

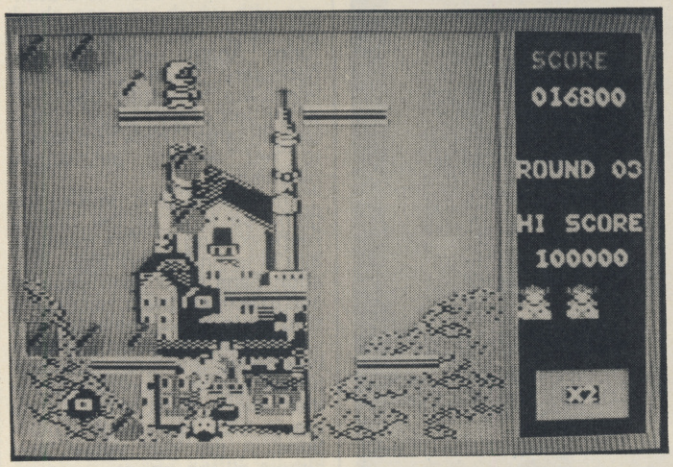
**Lastability 89%**
No way this game will be solved overnight.

**Value for money 86%**
If the idea appeals, the game won't let you down.

**Overall 88%**
Very clever and original, but it might not be everyone's cup of tea.

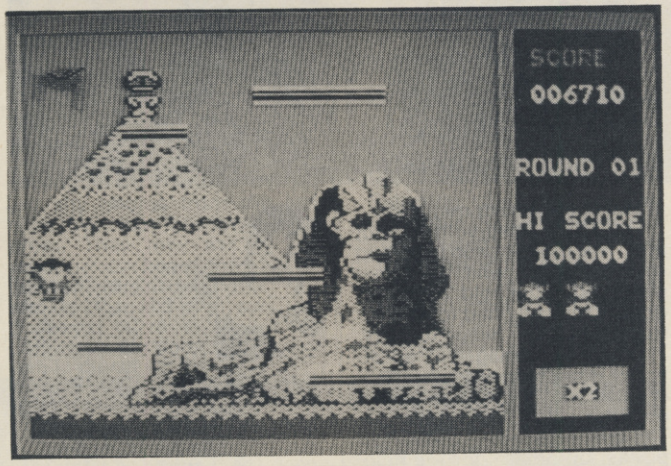
# BOMBJACK

**Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only**



*Aarggh! What have Elite done? They've got the licence to a brilliant arcade game and completely ruined the conversion. For a start Bombjack himself has now become Fatjack — he's far too big, as are the various meanies, and consequently the playing area is considerably reduced. If there are meanies strolling along the top platform it's impossible to collect the bombs there — Fatjack is too obese to fly through the gap between the nasty's head and the top of the screen. The bombs are also huge and don't fizzle any more, they just flash. The original music has been removed and now an average version of a Jean Michel Jarre tune thumps away. After seeing the excellent Spectrum version this is an immense disappointment, I'm sure the conversion could have been far, far, better than this.*

*Oh dear, what a complete and utter mess. Playing the arcade version of* Bombjack *happens to be in my top ten of 'fun things to do', but, unfortunately, Elite's interpretation is awful and doesn't look, sound or play anything like the original. The graphics and music are awful, the former being very fat — even pregnant looking — and the latter being an incredibly poor Jean Michel Jarre rip off. It really is all very inept and I didn't enjoy playing Elite's Bombjack* in the slightest.




*Bombjack* is a super powered hero who has dedicated his life to truth, freedom and defusing bombs. Unfortunately the inhabitants of his cosy world are far from benign, and their favourite occupation is hassling and harrassing Mr Jack. Their touch is deadly and contact with any of them snatches away one of the three lives supplied for his superheroing activities.

In his quest to dispose of bombs, our superhero is far from parochial, travelling around the world to continue his quest. There are five different locations, each containing a backdrop depicting a famous place. Each screen contains twenty four bombs of the traditional 'bowling ball with a bit of string on it' type. Whoever made these explosive devices was not exactly skillful, since they never ever explode, no matter how long they are lit.

Bomb disposal is Jack's hobby and the little chap sproings around platforms on the screens, gathering up the explosive devices as he does so. The little caped crusader can leap into the air and move left and right with a press of the fire button and a push on the joystick. Bombs are collected by travelling over them, and when the first bomb on a screen is in the bag another bursts into life. It doesn't really matter if you don't run straight off and get the active bomb, but if you do a bonus is awarded. Collect twenty three bombs in the active state and a whopping 50,000 bonus points are added to your score. Once all the bombs on a screen have been collected, Jack materialises in the middle of the next exotic location.

Each screen consists of a pretty scene with the bombs and platforms overlaid. Jack can't jump through the platforms but he can run along them. He is governed by all the proper laws of gravity and if the miniscule chappy takes a bound into the air then he also has to fall down. Repeated bashings on the fire button cause him to drift down at a slower rate. Pushing up on the joystick while sproinging skyward, puts the little sprite into turbo jump mode and pulling down with the fire button held down curtails the super hero's sky flying activities.

This is all well and good but there are evil creatures terrorizing the little fellow. The first and most fundamental nasty to beware of is the screen-patrolling bird creature which roughly homes in on your position. Luckily it moves slowly and has a little brain which is easily outwitted. Then there are the robotic creatures who enjoy a life cycle fed by kinetic energy. The longer you spend on a screen, the quicker the baddies arrive. Robots appear in the top left hand corner of the scene, materialising in mid air with a bit of an explosion to drop onto the nearest platform. The mechanical monsters trundle left and right along their landing platform for a while and then decide to walk off the edge. When a robot hits the ground the kinetic energy built up during the fall transfers the metal meanie into an airborne creature that's all the more deadly. Rotating balls and vicious snails also zoom around the screen trying to wipe your hero from the face of the game.

The nasties don't have it all their own way, however. Every so often a disk bearing the letter 'P' arrives in the playing area heralded by a continuous siren wail. Jumping through this power pill immobilises all the nasties on the screen and turns them into smiling faces. Points are awarded for leaping through a disabled nasty, which is conveniently eliminated as you do so.

A magic button with the letter 'E' emblazoned on it adds another life to Jack's supply when collected, and a Bonus button 'B' adds points when collected and increases the value of subsequent bombs gathered up on that screen.

*I've only played the arcade version on a few occasions, so I can't really comment on the quality of the conversion, but even so, it is obvious to me that it is graphically and sonically very inferior. Not that it could be as good as the original, but it could most certainly be better than it is.* Bombjack *on the 64 doesn't play too well, mainly due to the size of the sprites — they are too large and restrict deft movements. The game becomes very frustrating to play because of this, and I soon gave up altogether. The characters and backdrops aren't very well drawn either, and the colour scheme used makes the game look bland.* Bombjack *could have been better, but as it stands it is rather annoying and not very interesting to play.*

**Presentation 62%**
Nothing special, very few options and little else.

**Graphics 56%**
Porky sprites are the order of the day, with average backdrops for desert.

**Sound 63%**
Fair, if annoying at times.

**Hookability 60%**
Easy enough to get into, but not overly addictive.

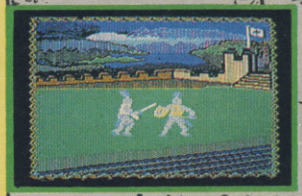
**Lastability 46%**
Too frustrating and not playable enough to maintain interest.

**Value for Money 40%**
You could get nearly 100 plays on the real thing for the same price, and it would be more fun than this version.

**Overall 47%**
A below average game and a disappointing arcade conversion.

# KNIGHT GAMES

by Jon Williams



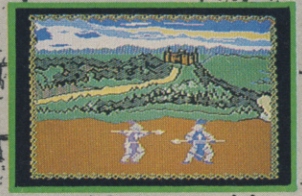
Sword fight 1

Crossbow

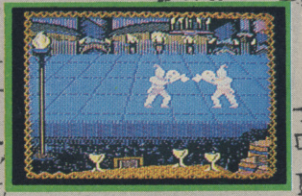
Quarterstaff

Ball & Chain

Archery



Pike Staff



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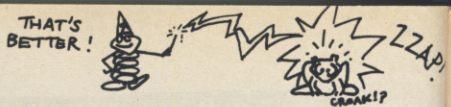



# SPELLBOUND

**MAD (Mastertronic), £2.99 cass, Joystick or keys**

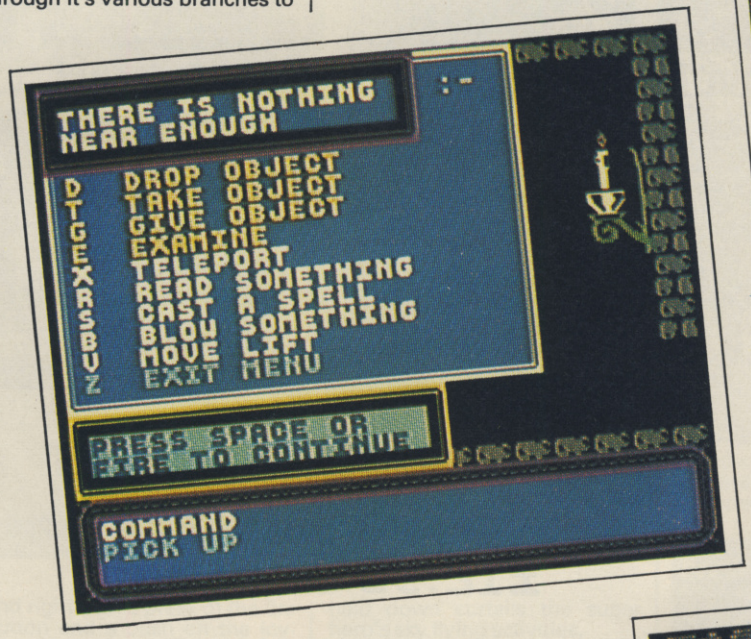
Magic Knight, who previously starred in *Finders Keepers*, is back on the small screen with the release of *Spellbound*. This time the hero in a tin can is in a spot of bother with his pal and tutor, Gimbal the Wizard. Though adept at his craft, the poor magician is getting a little bit senile as old age creeps up on him, and as a result he made a slight mistake in casting a rice pudding improvement rune. Instead of having a something nice for afters, Gimbal and Magic Knight were zapped a million miles and years away to the mythical castle of Karn.

However, the tutor and scholar were not the only ones to be mystically teleported — a whole bunch of characters were ripped out of the space—time continuum and deposited within the castle. Since none of the other characters were really of the heroic type, Magic Knight decided that it was down to him to place all the different chaps and chapesses back into their respective times and homes.

There are eight other characters, including Gimbal, around the place and although they won't actively come to MK's aid — due to the lethargy induced when they were warped across mind staggering amounts of space/time — their help can be obtained by clever interaction. As a result the different persons within the *Spellbound* universe have to be looked after, and without the correct intervention it's all too possible to have one of them go and die on Magic Knight. The game ends if this happens.

*Spellbound* is a full implementation of an adventure within an aracde framework. The joystick is used to move MK between different locations whereas more complex actions are achieved by a person/computer interface known as Windovision. Pressing fire calls up the first menu, and allows access through it's various branches to a whole range of commands. The system is wholly dynamic as the commands available to Magic Knight depend upon the objects within his inventory. A handy hand shaped pointer is used in conjunction with up and down to select a command and fire selects it. As the pointy fingered paw passes various options they highlight. The main commands available are those found in any type of text adventure: get, drop, give, take, examine, read and so on.

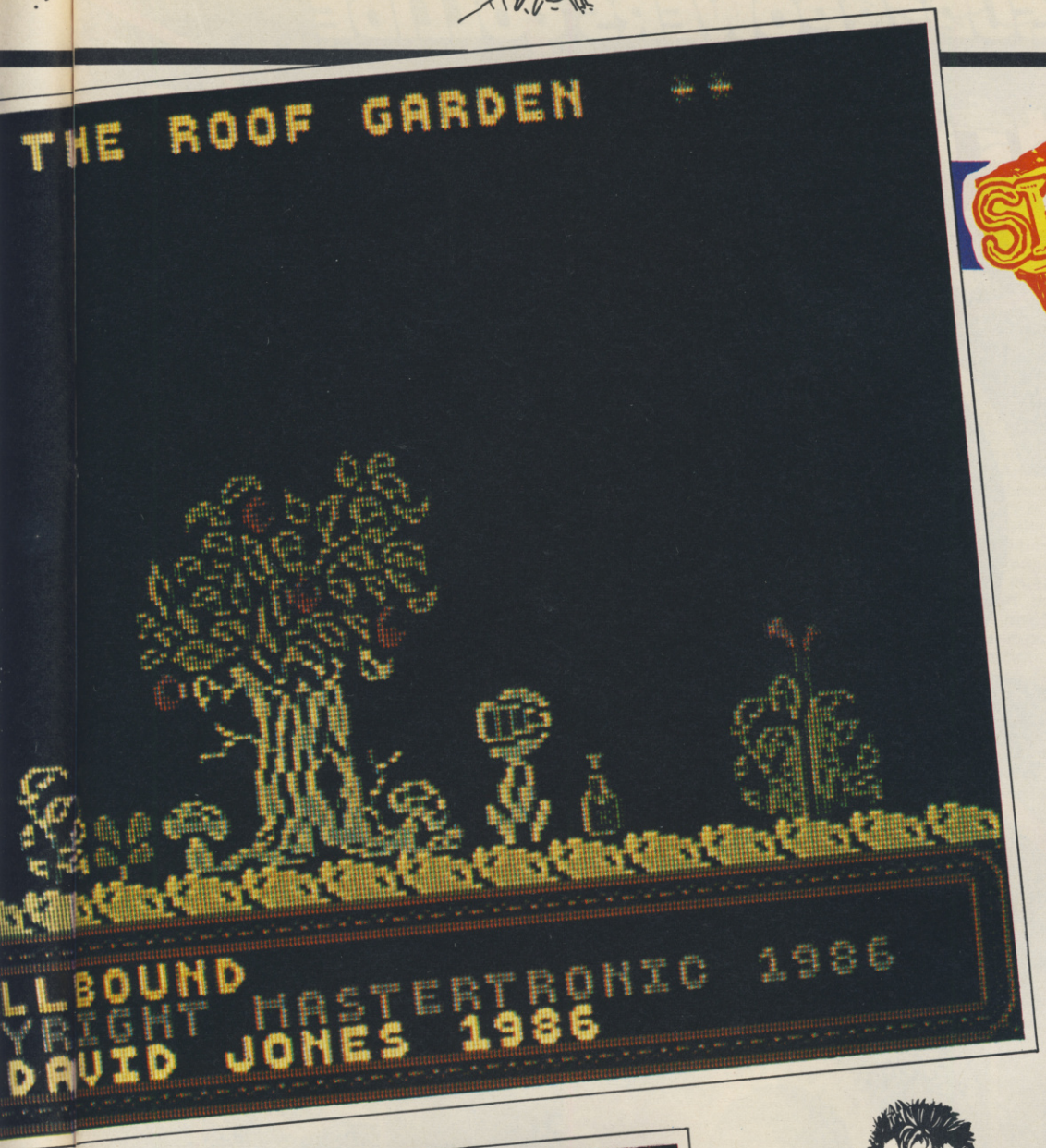
As any real person, Magic Knight has to look after his energy reserves. Using the exa-



*What a great game! The windowing system used is amazing and allows the player to do so much with the character. You open up one window and are presented with a heap of sub-menus, choosing one of these gives more sub-menus and so on — so simple to use, but very effective indeed. I didn't like the music too much, it was a bit raucous, but the graphics are fine. The thing that's really fab 'n' brill is that it only costs three quid, and for a game with so much in it there's no excuse for you to miss it.*

Spellbound *is very good indeed and it's something of a surprise to see a game of this quality appearing on a budget label. Most outstanding of all* Spellbound*'s outstanding qualities is the game design. Windovision is about the best person/computer interface I've seen yet, it makes such prestigious releases as* Shadowfire *and* Enigma Force *look very clumsy indeed. Quite amusing considering the six pounds difference in price. Though the graphics aren't the best to be seen on the Commodore, they are fairly effective and do the job well. The theme tune is potentially annoying but that doesn't matter as long as you've got a volume control on your TV set. Next time you're set to fork out ten quid for a game, take a look at* Spellbound *first as you may find yourself saving an awful lot of money.*

RIBBIT!?



mine command upon himself results in a fairly detailed resume of his current state of health. His physical state also affects how many objects he can carry — picking up an artifact when in an exhausted state causes the 'TOO HEAVY' message to appear. All the other characters have their own energy status and MK must also look after them. With their wits dimmed by teleportation, the poor souls don't even know when to sleep, it's up to MK to tell them.

The castle itself is a fairly interesting sort of place and is displayed as a series of flip screens as our hero heroically bounds between them. The screens are labelled to make them easier to remember, and there's seven floors to castle Karn. To get between them a lift must be used and the commands needed to manipulate the lift pop into the window when appropriate. Neat, eh?

To complete the game Gimbal must be rescued from the king of the castle who is holding him and then the senile sage will be able to bestow upon the player the happy ending he deserves.

Spellbound *is the best Mastertronic release to date, and puts a majority of other, more expensive arcade adventures to shame. It's a doddle to get into and although it's difficult, it isn't frustrating. The Windovision system looks quite complex with so many commands and menus, but it is surprisingly easy to use and works extremely well. Despite adequate graphics and sound,* Spellbound *is very neat indeed and worth every penny of the ludicrously low asking price.*

**Presentation 94%**
The Windovision system allows easy input, and a wide variety of options are available.

**Graphics 80%**
Adequate and pleasant though lacking in colour.

**Sound 67%**
Rob Hubbard assaults the ears once more, though this isn't a bad effort.

**Hookability 93%**
The arcade elements immediately hook any player . . .

**Lastability 94%**
. . . and the adventure bits provide the long term appeal.

**Value For Money 99%**
At this ridiculously low cost it's hard to justify not buying *Spellbound*.

**Overall 94%**
A superb release'worthy of a £9.99 price tag, miss it at your peril.

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Transatlantic Simulations, Unit 10, The Parkway Industrial Estate, Heneage Street, Birmingham

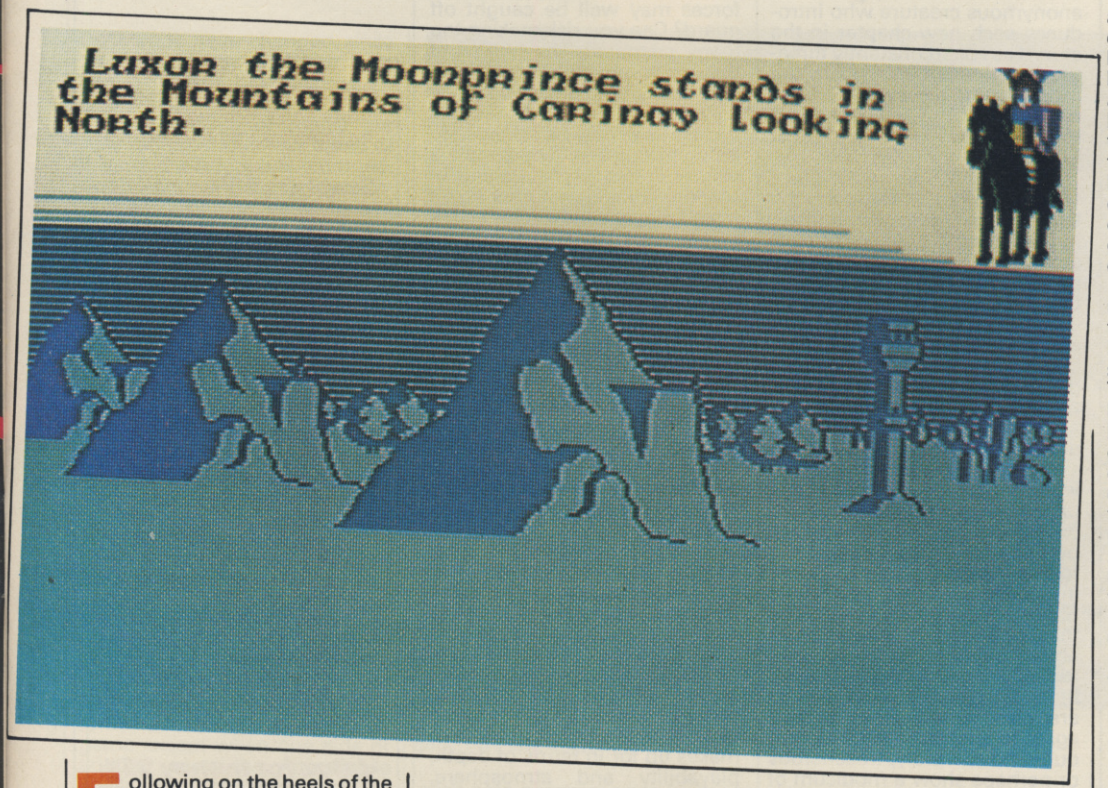
# NIGHTIES IN SHINING ARMOUR

on't get any ideas about last month's ZZAP! Challenge. I might not be sthuper with a joystick but nobody would let me play *Germany 1985*. Oh, and as for me being an Atari snob . . . er well, it's true to the extent that I own an Atari ST but the main reason for that is I do a lot of word processing at home and I find this to be the ideal machine. I can't afford an Amiga. Anyway, I can play *A Mind Forever Voyaging* — the best game ever written. There, I've defended myself. Like it or lump it. So what if I'm not the most photogenic person in these hallowed pages — at least I don't wear young girl's nighties . . .

Anyway, why should I worry? I'm happily destined to oblivion writing this column every month and don't need to prove it by by boosting Julian's ego in the Challenge. After that horrifically mind-numbing ordeal, I toyed with the idea of running a strategy challenge but decided it wasn't feasable. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to hear from any of you who have played a campaign based on your favourite computer wargame. It might prove helpful to people still struggling with the game to read how more experienced players won their battles. If anybody out there is interested in having their greatest military achievements chronicled in ZZAP! Strategy, let me know. There's probably more than fame involved . . .

## DOOMDARK'S REVENGE

**Beyond, £9.95 cass, keyboard only**

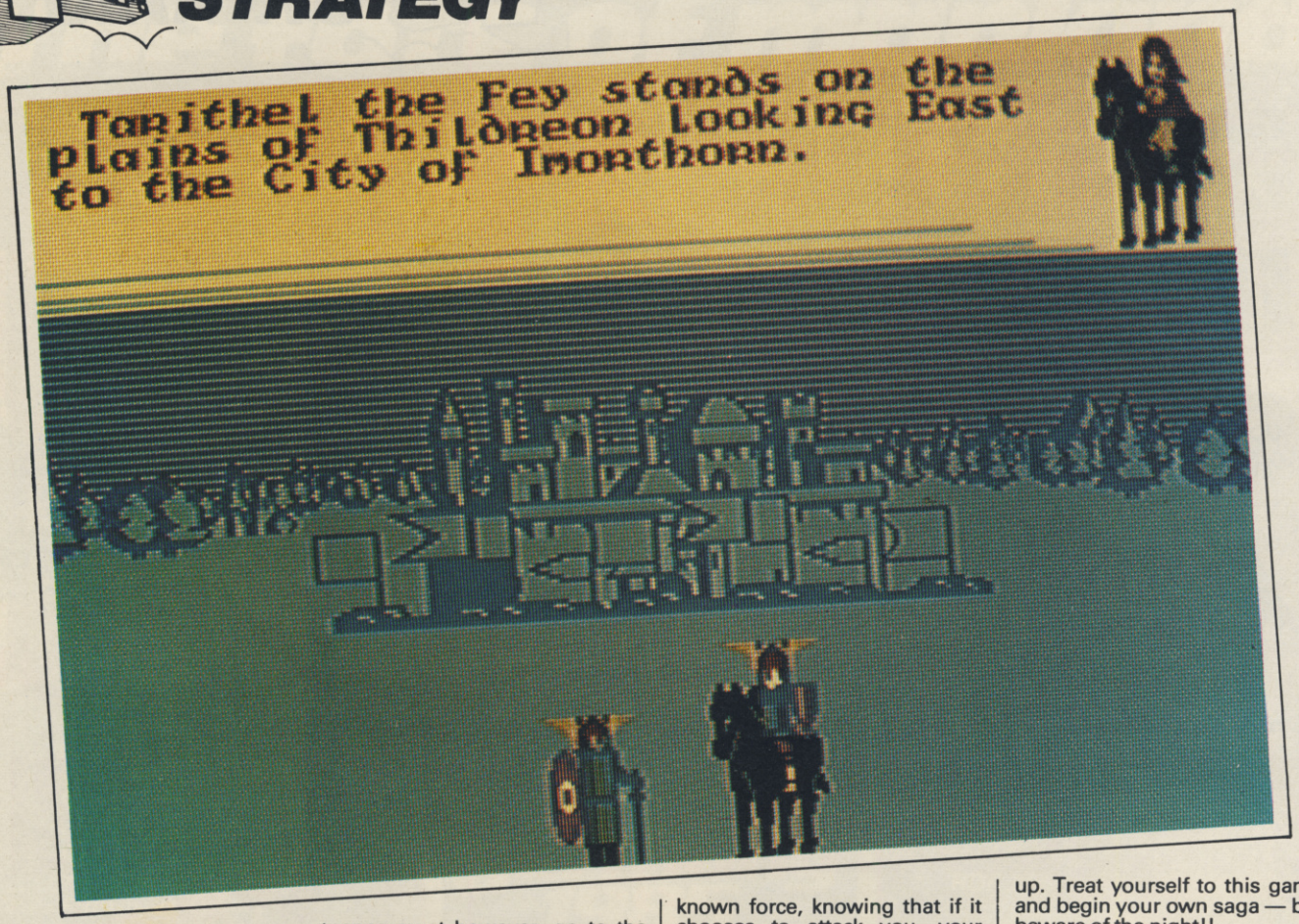



Following on the heels of the highly succesful *Lords of Midnight*, Beyond have released that epic game's successor. Larger than the original that inspired it, this game boasts 6144 locations, 48000 screen views, 128 characters and as many objects to collect. The game is set during the period after the destruction of the Ice Crown and all that it stood for by the young hero, Morkin. He meets Tathirel the Fey, daughter of the Lord of Dreams and falls in love with her. Arrangements are made for their wedding.

However, a new force of evil is afoot. Shareth the Heartstealer, daughter of Doomdark and Empress of the Frozen Empire kidnaps young Morkin in an attempt to eliminate Luxor and bring about the destruction of the Land of Icemark, which lies to the north of the Land of Midnight. Enough of all these capitals. Suffice to say that your quest is to guide the forces of good to victory over this evil cradle snatcher.

For those three or four people unfamiliar with the layout of these games, play is totally keyboard controlled. You may see through the eyes of Luxor, Tarithel, Rorthron or Morkin himself (but only once he has been freed from Shareth). Single keypresses can select a different viewpoint, move the selected character to a new location, select a new character to play or examine situations, armies and people and choose between listed options when various situations arise.

The idea is that by guiding characters and armies to the right places at the right time, a victory over the enemy may be incurred. Thus the game is a hybrid of adventure and strategy. Screens are a mixture of text and graphic displays. The text is a neatly defined 'American Uncial' style script whilst the graphics take the form of simplistic but effective, four colour views of local terrain and any distinguishing features. This simplicity is far from surprising




considering the number of locations and viewpoints crammed into the program.

One of the more interesting aspects of presentation is that whilst a well presented instruction booklet is supplied to teach you the mechanics of the game, you have to listen to a specially recorded audio cassette to fully understand the plot. The cassette is prepared rather like a radio show with narrator, main characters, a few sound effects and incidental music played on synthesizers. To tell you the truth, it's all rather amusing. The narrator reminds me of a televised satire on Shakespeare which was full of 'Twas a dark, dark night, that cold and dark night. Dark and cold it was . . .' Everything is 'dark of hue' instead of black or 'soft of melody' instead of wimpish. Good, atmospheric stuff, eh? The narrator sounds like a Spitting Image Lawrence Olivier (shame about the lack of a Gielgud sound-alike though). This is fun. I've always wanted to write record reviews.

Rich string sounds ooze through the eight track with all the atmospheric authenticity of a Fender Stratocaster screeching through a primordial mist. The characters come from the Awwfully Jolly School Of Acting and sound as if their involvement with the tape has been slotted in between addressing Young Aristocrats Against Work and a good night at Stringfellow's. Prize for most sincere performance must however, go to the anonymous creature who introduces each new chapter in the story. His voice constantly threatens to induce catatonia in the listener. It's totally devoid of enthusiam, character or anything else for that matter. Great fun.

But back to the game. Once you've suffered through the tape, you can get down to playing what soon appears to be a compulsive game. Whilst any particular location might not be that interesting, the sheer scope of the game soon comes over and the difficulty of the situation becomes evident. No doubt a good deal of book keeping is necessary if all four characters are to be used to the best advantage.

The sophistication of the plot is a considerable improvement on *Lords of Midnight*. Whole armies exist for you to convince of the just cause facing your forces and responses are always inpredictable. The despicable Shareth will be trying to lure them to her side in order to bring about the early demise of your forces, so beware. The characteristics of these armies' leaders are also varied. Even if they agree to join you, they may turn out to be cowardly, treacherous or perhaps show a modicum of intelligence or bravery. Only trial and error will reveal who are worthy allies.

These features add depth and tension to a well devised backdrop, do you approach an unknown force, knowing that if it chooses to attack you, your forces may well be caught off guard? Can you risk making too many enemies? The nature of this epic venture is such that only considered and varied play will bring about a full victory. Victory itself may be achieved to different degrees. The simplest victory is that of the freeing of Morkin. Greater victories result from bringing more characters safely back to the Gates of Varenorn. Shareth wins the game outright if she kills Luxor. With his death, all is lost. If Morkin dies, Luxor's strength will diminish becase of the grief for his loss. The only chance for victory will then be to destroy Shareth for good. How to do this remains to be descovered but it is possible.

*Doomdark's Revenge* is a worthy successor to the cleverly devised *Lords of Midnight* and is a must for fans of the original despite the gimmicky and pretentious (but funny) story on tape. The inclusion of a save game feature was a wise move and to take both cassette and disk users into account was better yet. Mike Singleton should be justly proud of a truly epic series of games. What the game lacks in aesthetics, it more than makes up for in terms of depth, playability and atmosphere. Better yet, the game stands on its own feet. There's nothing to be gained from having played the original except knowledge of the bare game mechanics and those are easy enough to pick up. Treat yourself to this game and begin your own saga — but beware of the night!!

**Presentation 87%**
Pretty good. Shame about the gimmicky tape though.

**Graphics 60%**
Necessarily mediocre. Not a reflection of the game's overall quality.

**Instructions 90%**
Everything you could want to know about playing but never dared ask.

**Authenticity 93%**
Characters respond according to the dictates of the environment. Atmospheric and realistic play results from this well thought out aspect of the game.

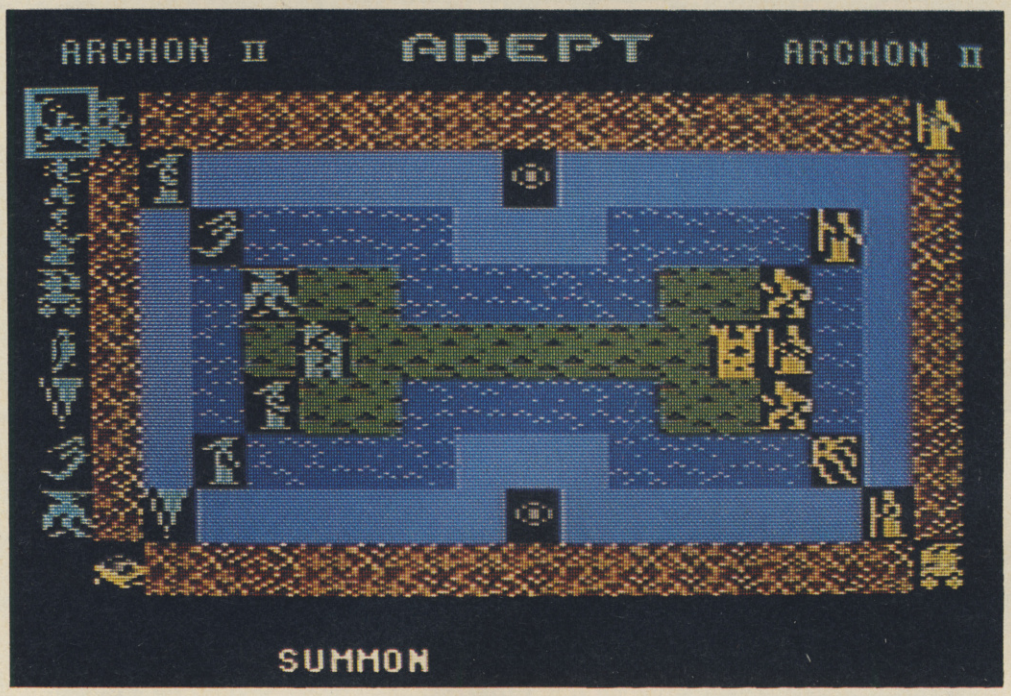
**Playability 96%**
Even if you're on the wrong track, the freedom for experimentation is another one of the game's strong points.

**Value for money 95%**
Oodles of game for the price.

**Overall 95%**
An addictive and compelling episode to a great saga.

# ARCHON II: ADEPT

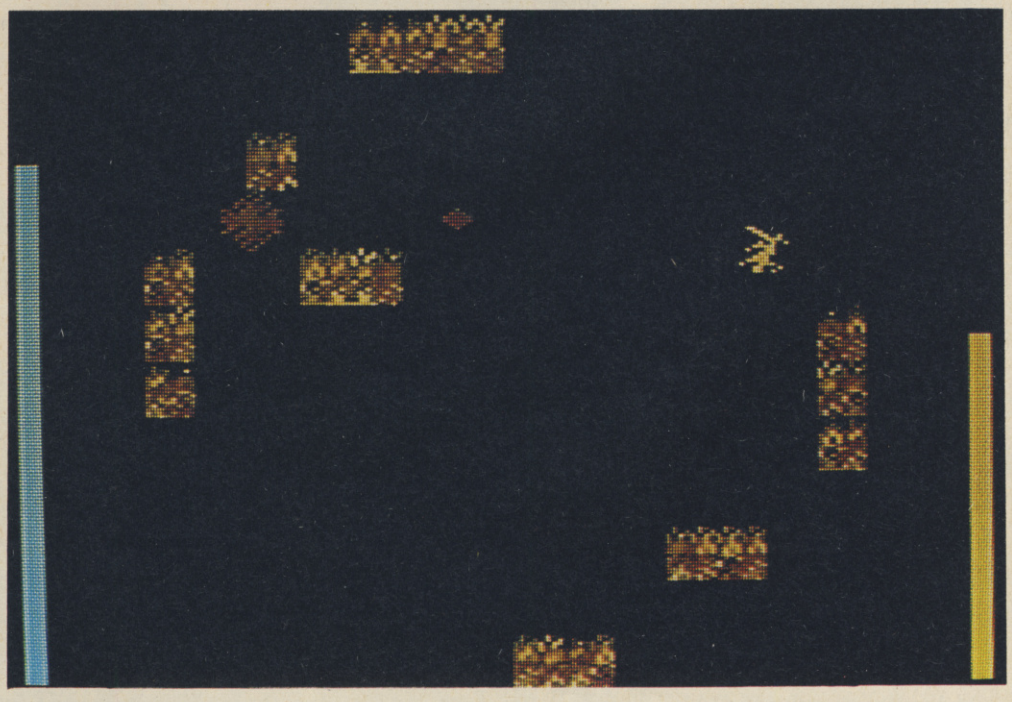
**Ariolasoft (Electronic Arts), £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only**




The *Archon* arms race — Chaos and Order prepare for battle.

Times have changed since the Master of Order battled with the Mistress of Chaos in the days of *Archon*. The old wellsprings of magic are now failing and a new breed of wizard, the Adept has emerged. Controlling previously unsummoned armies of demons and elementals, they have forced the age old war to take a new turn. The battlefield of the new age is displayed on the screen as a diagramatic representation of the four elements, earth, water, air and fire. Each one is shown as a different coloured band surrounding the latter. Just to complicate matters, midway along each of the horizontal bands representing air are two black areas. These are voids. Their importance to the game becomes relevant later. Six power points move across corners of the board during play. Controlling these is imperative because they supply the energy necessary for the adepts to use magic and fight, the only means by which one can win the game.

Each side has a citadel in their half of the Earth section. This remains vacant throughout the game except when one side or another casts the Apocalypse spell (the consequences of which are dealt with below). At key points across the board, higlighted magical strong points exist. These must be controlled to ensure a constant supply of magical energy. The four adepts each side possesses are identical in appearance but each one is particularly suited to one or another of the elements. They may magically transport themselves anywhere across the board but operate best in their own areas.



A skirmish in the elemental plane of fire. And chaos seems to be doing very well thankyou!

Each adept can also draw on an arsenal of spells. These are Summon (which calls upon one of a selection of creatures that may be placed anywhere within the summoner's elemental territory); Heal which brings any wounded adept or creature up to full strength; Weaken which does the opposite but only works on creatures; Imprison which incapacitates any creature; Release sets the imprisoned character free (continual imprisonment of a character causes a constant drain on energy so setting a prisoner free is necessary at some point). Banish may be used to eliminate any summoned creature. Finally there's the Apocalypse spell. This sets the showdown for the two sides by pitting one adept against the other inside a citadel. In the main, this is used to finish off a depleted army or as a desperate last stand.

The monsters vary for each of the two forces. Both sides can summon demons. The juggernaut is a demonic missile, invulnerable to everything except the song of the siren (one of the creatures of chaos). The wraith feeds on the life force of its opponents and remains invisible for most of the time. The Gorgon kills its victims by increasing degrees of paralysis whilst the deadly chimera breathes fire, snorts poison gas and stings like a scorpion.

Creatures of chaos are the behemoth who whilst being slow, has a punch like Julian Rignall's (see ZZAP! 13's cover); the siren, who's haunting voice whittles away her opponent's life force (*a la* Tina Turner); the ifrit — a portable whirlwind and a firebird whose weapons and armour consist of a sphere of flame. The creatures available to the adepts of order are the giant, a Liddonseque rock thrower; the kraken, a gigantic octopus; the thunderbird, an airborne missile

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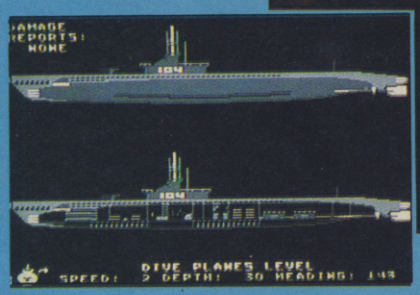


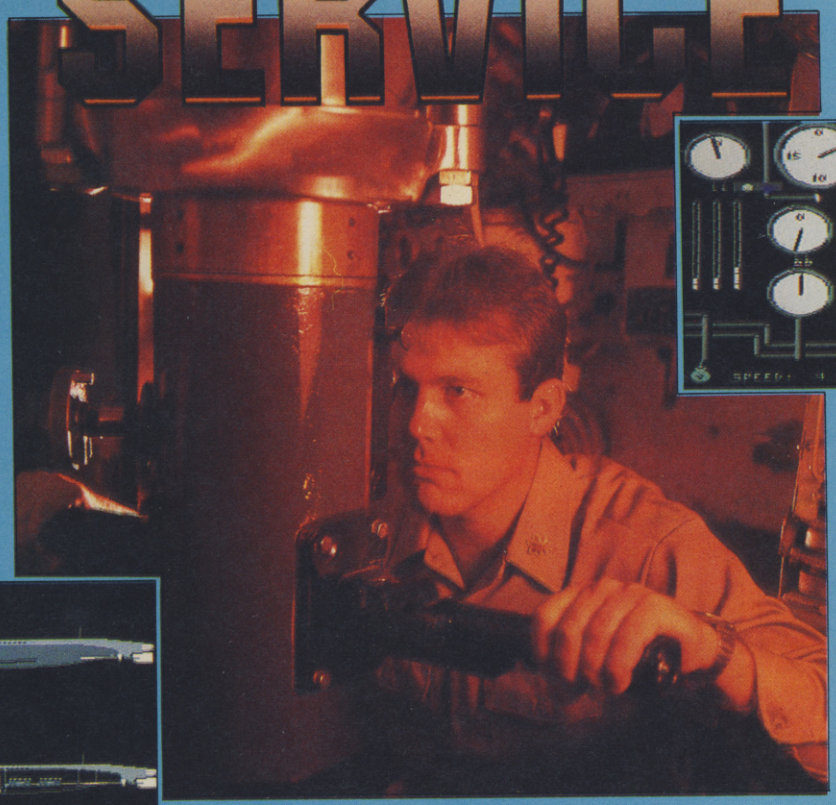

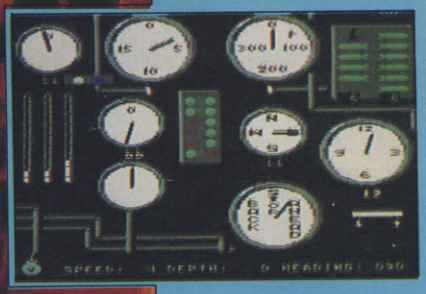

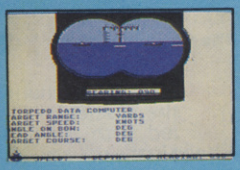


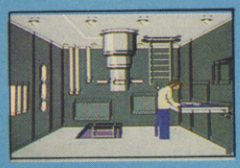

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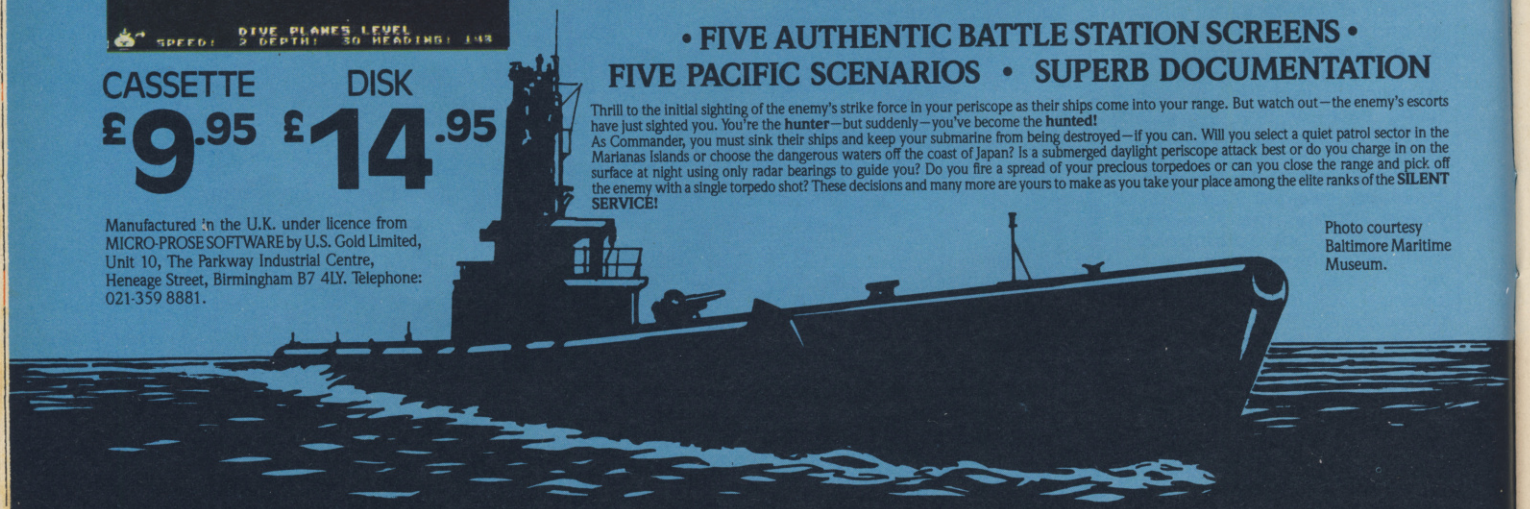


# THE FIRST AUTHENTIC SUBMARINE SIMULATION

Transatlantic SIMULATIONS

MICRO PROSE

launcher and the fireball firing salamander.

Most of the game is played on the strategic board, where adepts and monsters are manipulated to control most of the vantage points. Summoned monsters must stay the the territory they were summoned from or move into the adjacent square in the next element. They are always stronger in their own squares however. They may move as far as they like until they encounter an enemy. When this happens, the contested square expands to the full size of the screen, complete with suitable terrain. The opposing icons are then plunged into combat, each taking advantage of its particular weaponry. At the sides of the screen each icon's life force is displayed as a bar which decreases as wounds are inflicted. After either icon uses its weapon, there is a pause whilst power is generated to use the weapon again. The end of this interval is indicated by a bell tone — low tone for chaos and high tone for order. The battle continues until one of the creatures has been eliminated.

There are, as you might expect, complications. The two Void squares are the only places where magic energy supplies always exist but magic does not actually work in them so they are difficult to control. Spells have maximum and minimum strengths and the amount of energy required to cast them is shown during the spell selection process. The power with which a spell is cast, affects the outcome as a result of this.

The game also has its problems. It is best played as a two player game. There are no skill levels and the computer is such a good player, an awful lot of practice is required before a victory may be gained against it. Then there's the question of the apocalypse spell. No matter how well the game is going for you, if the other side uses this spell the outcome of the whole game depends on which player is better with a joystick over the next few seonds. The game can end too abruptly without rewarding good strategy. In a two player game, I suggest you reach an agreement with your opponent not to use this spell during play.

However the latter point also brings me to my main criticism of the game as a strategy and my reluctance to review it in this column. Ultimately the outcome depends on the joystick proficiency of the player. An opponent may be banished by magic if a direct encounter is undesirable but the cost in magic is too high to allow this form of defence to be used frequently. Worst still, it does not affect adepts and they are always the most powerful of adversaries. The game is significantly more complex than *Archon I* but I feel that it is not an improvement. It is a demanding game which works best as a two player contest. With two joystick junkies hammering away, no doubt a great deal of fun could be had. Unfortunately though, the game is still flawed.

**Presentation 83%**
Good packaging and manual coupled with useful game options and layout.

**Graphics 72%**
Animated icons and a few pretty finishing touches.

**Instructions 80%**
A well documented and easily accessible game.

**Authenticity N/A**
There's no precedent for rating this feature.

**Playability 68%**
Unless two compatible players get to grips with the game, you're going to find the war both short and unsatisfactory.

**Value for money 79%**
Not unreasonable for the type of game.

**Overall 78%**
Though flawed and somewhat contrived, it could prove to be an interesting alternative (but not an addition) to the original.

ZZAP! STRATEGY

# THE FORCE

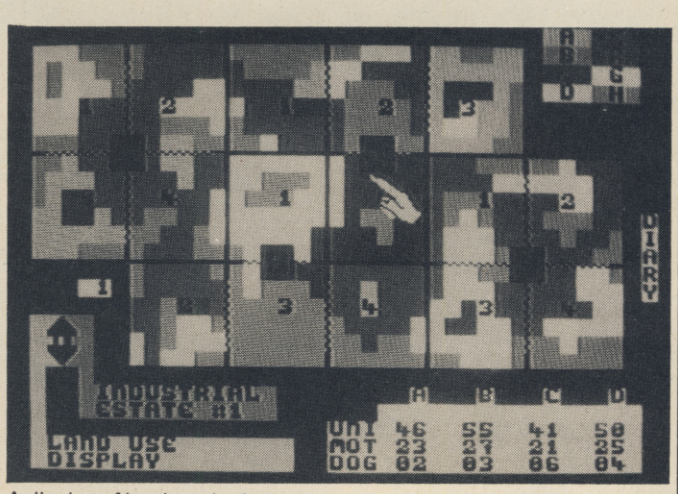
**Argus Press Software, £9.95 cass, Joystick only**

The Force represents an unusual approach to strategy gaming in that instead of being a military commander in charge of winning a battle against an easily identifiable foe by the process of elimination, the player's task is to run a town's constabulary. This presents far more of a challenge to the player as the police are a peaceful force in a generally peaceful society and the 'enemy' is not easily observable.

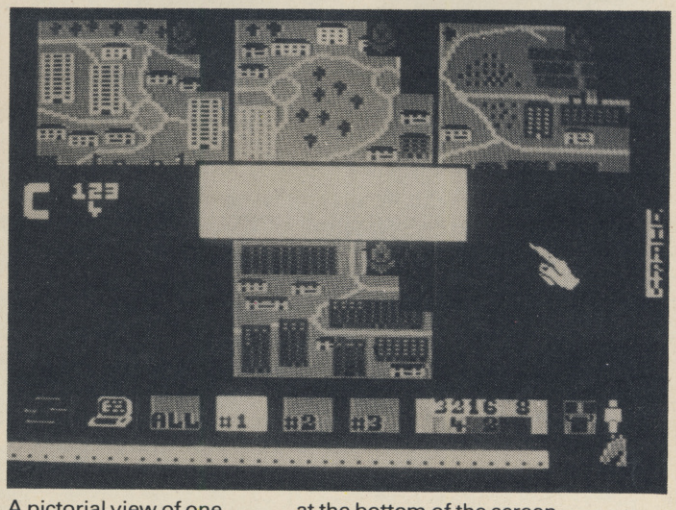
The supposedly typical town of Middletown has been created as the backdrop for the strategy. It has many of the features and similarities of a small city, complete with urban, suburban and residential housing; centres of entertainment; industrial estates and the unfortunate but realistic run down, underdeveloped areas. Middletown also has its own airport. Across the town are four police stations. Each has its own particular equipment and type of policing and your job is to effectively control and co-ordinate these four stations with the aim of keeping down crime whilst simultaneously creating a good community atmosphere.

The individual tasks include VIP visits via the airport, meetings of all kinds, marches, football matches (the town has an aspiring team who are climbing the league, though there has been no trouble to date) and traffic control. Such tasks are incorporated into the daily routine of making sure there are enough forces available during the day's three shifts and, of course, throughout the week.

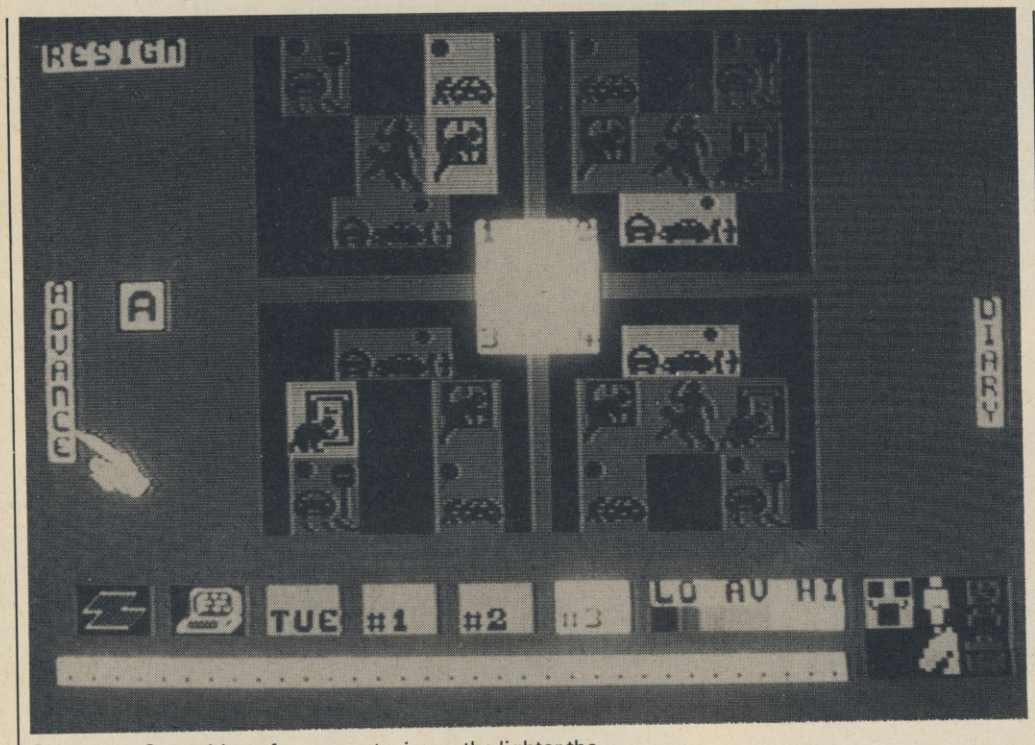
Gameplay is fairly straightforward as the whole simulation is icon driven. An overall view of the town may be split into any of




A display of land use in the area covered by your four stations.




A pictorial view of one station's territory. Note the Shift markers and icon store at the bottom of the screen. Deployment is handled from screens like this.




Oh dear . . . Something of a crime stricken area. The shaded diagrams represent recent crimes; the lighter the shade, the more serious the crime rate.

four more localised views, with a police station at the centre of each. These are shown in pictorial form during the deployment of units. They may later be viewed as collections of colour coded icons which show the crime level there. The lighter the colour, the higher the crime rate in that area.

Units are deployed by selecting the icon for the type of unit you want (foot, motorised etc) and positioning it over the area that needs covering. The diary for the week ahead needs to be checked whilst deploying forces. Any units selected to police the events in the diary have to be taken from the correct station, day and shift. The computer will not allow for error here. A message window at the bottom of the screen tells you how the events go and of any other crimes that happen during the week.

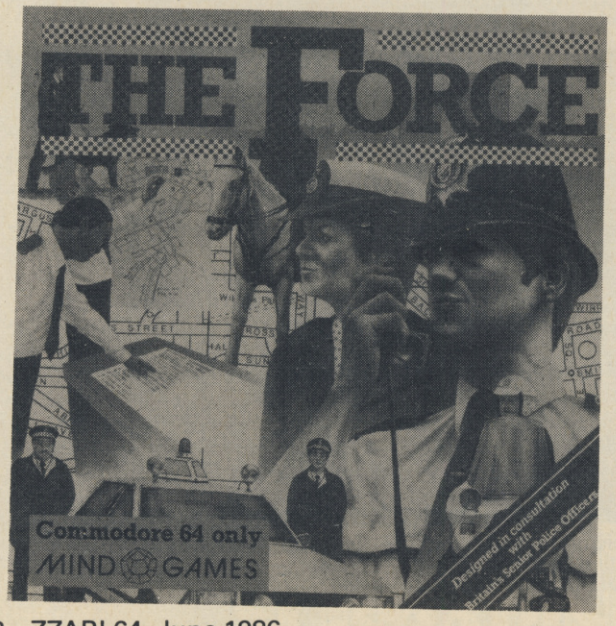
The statistics for the week may be examined to help you devise a strategy for the coming week and to meet the changing requirements of each area under your control. At the end of the week a mini-arcade section puts you in control of the traffic computer. As cars and trucks move along a perimeter road and venture towards the centre of the city, you have to ensure that everything runs smoothly. To change a set of lights, a cursor is moved over a set of lights before pressing the fire button. This changes the direction priority of the lights until the button is next pressed. This part of the game only lasts for a minute, so speed and accuracy are essential for maintaining a good traffic control system. After this has been completed, a message tells you how you're doing as Superintendent.

Whilst Argus Press have taken an original approach to a strategy game, there are problems. Three manuals are supplied with the game — one is a local information guide, another is a training manual suggesting strategies and guidlines for the many problems that might arise, and the last manual explains how to interact with the computer. None of them are particularly good, they constantly stress the difficulty of the situation but offer little in the way of a coherent guide to play. Strategies are expounded with reasonable detail, but the actual instructions for play are sloppy, unclear and incomplete. No proper explanation for the meaning of some of the icons appears, for instance. A first time player will not get into the game very quickly.

The screen layout is good — it's bright, informative and intelligently constructed, but the pointer is a little jerky for easy control, sometimes speeding up or slowing down (and it is occasionally necessary to be accurate and fast when using it). The traffic control section appears to be an excuse to add variety to gameplay without any consideration for the internal logic of the game. It is supposed to represent changes to the programming of the traffic computer, but even if a Superintendent had to be a qualified programmer it is unlikely that he would need to implement changes in real time. Another approach may have been better in this case.

These are however, small niggles. The real problem with *The Force* is that there isn't enough game there. Whilst it's subtle to have an 'unseen enemy', what results is very abstract play consisting of not much more than shoving a few icons around a screen. I sometimes felt that it was rather like shooting in the dark. Granted, this is where the challenge is supposed to lie but it's all too much of the same for me. There are no logistics to consider, no shape to the course of the game and never any obvious signs of progress.

There is no precedent by which to judge the authenticity of the game and I would give Argus the benefit of the doubt and say that it appears to be realistic. However, it must be remembered that the simulation is a microcosm of a conflict of sorts that is still going on around us. There are no historical notes or papers on policing in the eighties. I remember the authors who published books about the Falklands war before the conflict had even been resolved. The real situation in this case has not come to its conclusion as yet and therefore it is quite difficult to judge any kind of conclusion in the game in terms of comparative success or failure. You are only left with extremes. I, for one, am unsatisfied.




**Presentation 81%**
Good screen layout and packaging.

**Graphics 75%**
Workable and clear but nothing outstanding.

**Instructions 62%**
Plenty of them, but confusing by their omissions in places.

**Authenticity 79%**
Hard to judge but certainly flawed by the traffic control section.

**Playability 64%**
Hard to get into at first. Simple but monotonous later.

**Value for money 67%**
About as much as you could ask for the game.

**Overall 68%**
Interesting subject, but the game fails to live up to expectations.

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HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAMS

# KNIGHTS OF THE DESERT

**Transatlantic Simulations/US Gold (SSI), £14.95 disk, £9.95 cass, keyboard only**

This game, like *Tigers in the Snow* reviewed last issue, was first released some time ago but has only just been reincarnated in the Transatlantic Simulations format. The game comes packaged in a slim disk folder and contains a fold out rules sheet and the game itself. The game, as its title suggests, concentrates on the North African campaign in World War II. Although there are solitaire and two player options, you are restricted to playing axis forces during solo games.

The system uses true hexagonal movement, with all actions by either side taking place in a series of clearly defined segments, each of which are further divided into the required number of phases. SSI pay a great deal of attention to the most successful board game formats and this game is typical of their 'traditional' approach in game mechanics. Units are given standard identification markers and range in size from Corps to Regiment. Supply for the units on both sides is dealt with by a series of depots available to specific forces. Depots may be captured during the course of the game.

The rules are fairly complex, not so much in terms of too many rules, but the implications of the rules themselves. Movement, supply, morale and various other factors have been considered in great depth and the status of individual units can have a far reaching effect as a result. One thing is for certain, *Knights of the Desert* is not a game for the inexperienced (unless they have particular patience). A game could be played after just a few minutes of reading through the rules, but many of the effects would not be understood by any player who was not very experienced.

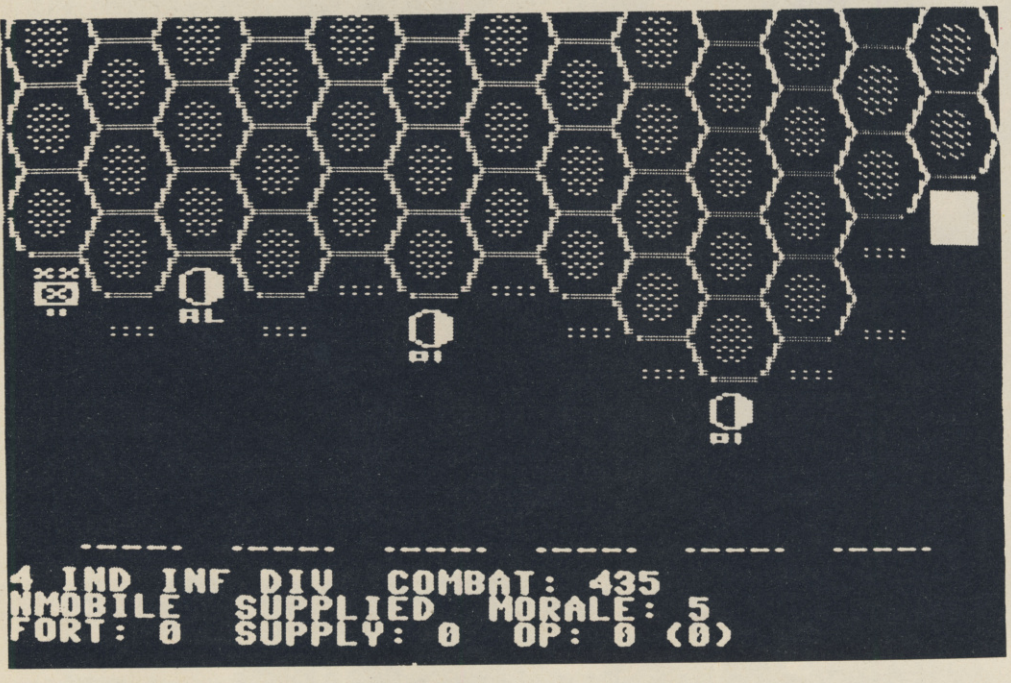
There are six scenarios and each uses SSI's predictably complex, but authentic, victory point system. Again, following the example set with previous SSI games, the player is provided with an order of battle listing along with charts for combat losses, air losses, combat risks (loss modifiers), defender odds, combat operation chart, morale modifiers, unit cadre table and an airpower table. Not that any of these are essential to play (though they can suggest strategies by themselves), but SSI's attitude towards the people who play their games is an extremely healthy one. By providing the tables, they allow dissection and examination of their own game design philosophy. A pleasing addition that would be welcome from other manufacturers.

Although the game is hex based, it would not have been prohibitive to include a joystick handling routine. The use of the keyboard to the exclusion of any other input devices makes play than perhaps it should have been. Also, while there are plenty of rules, they are a little unfriendly and when reading through them, I had the feeling that SSI expected to be dealing with a converted audience and therefore ignored the beginner who may be struggling to get to grips with the concept of wargaming. This shows just a slight hint of elitism which isn't really necessary.

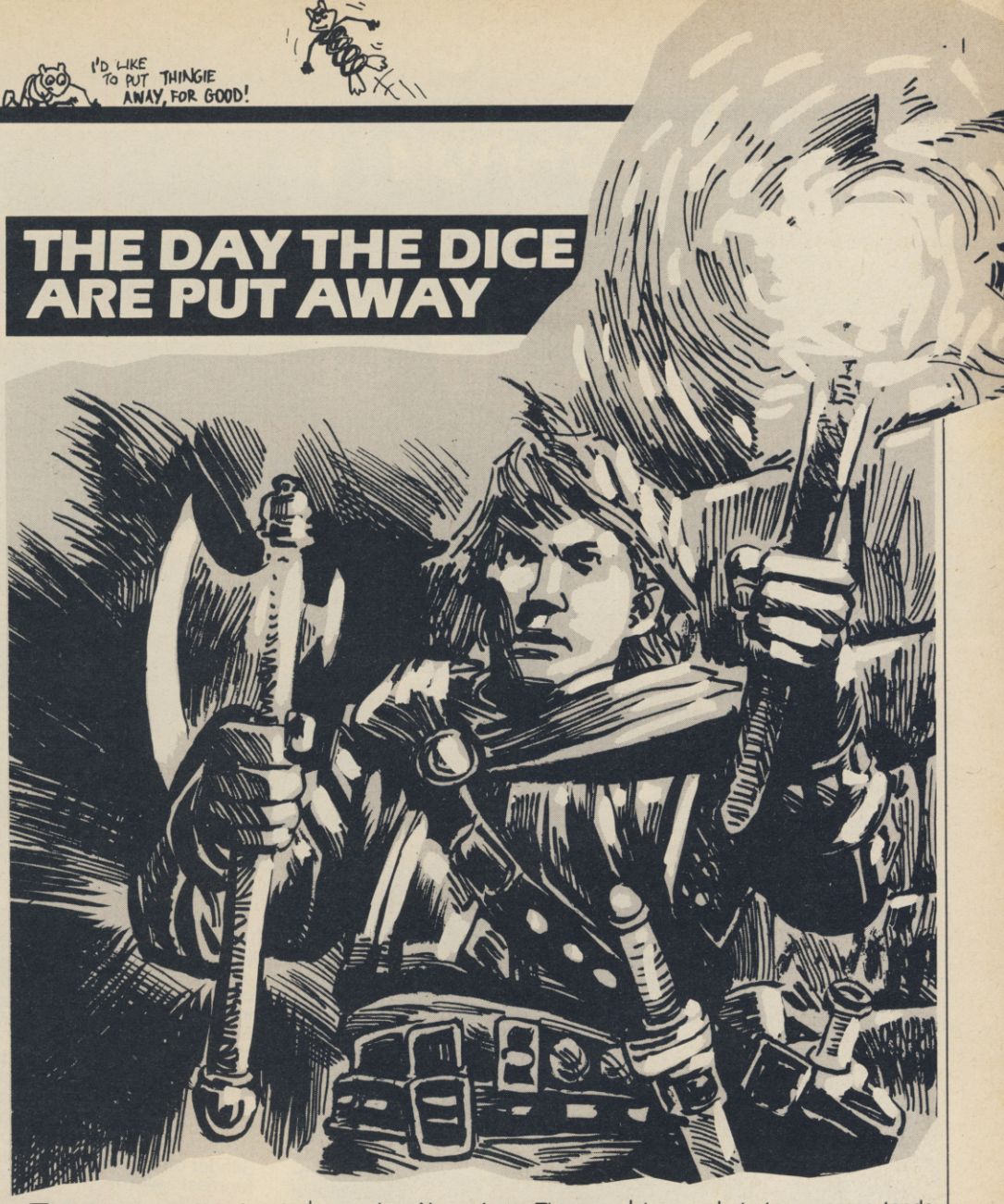
Play proceeds at a rather slow pace throughout and this is mainly due to the attention to detail from the rules system. It appears to be accurate and that is never something to be underestimated (though there are complexity levels and optional rules). But one of the best parts of the game lies in the packaging. The fold out rules booklet contains an historical essay called 'Brazen Knights and Blazing Sands' which, despite the dodgy title and a pretentious (and dare say it, warped) introduction, turns out to be a fascinating account of the North African campaign from the successful, but unsung, heroes of Wavell and O'Conner who hammered out a crushing defeat to the Italians for the bungling but popular Montgomery. Throughout most of this time Rommel, of course, gets a fair amount of attention.

To anybody concerned with the historical context of the game, the notes provide a coherent and essential reference work. Not many computer wargamers have a vast library of military history and fewer still would be aware of some of the circumstances surrounding the campaign. In contrast to the rules, the historical notes provide an entertaining backdrop which, despite the necessary brevity and the fact that the campaign covered many engagements over a couple of years, remains highly informative.

Really though, the game has little new to offer and US Gold themselves have now released enough games to provide reasonable alternatives — many of which are superior. PSS are almost ready to release their own more limited but attractively simplified *Tobruk* and CCS may be converting their superlative Spectrum wargame, *Desert Rats*. Experienced gamers with an interest in the period should find everything they could want in a simulation of the era from *Knights of the Desert*. For everyone else, I would recommend other choices before buying this game. It puts a lot of demands on the player and gameplay and aesthetics are beginning to show their age. However, it remains a challenging and authentic game of the period, and for the price it is very reasonable.



# THE DAY THE DICE ARE PUT AWAY



**Presentation 76%**
The fine printing makes the instructions and notes less fun to read and the screen display is a little above average.

**Graphics 80%**
Good use of unit markers and legible display.

**Instructions 65%**
Everything's there, but with very few explanations of the concepts used. The historical notes are better.

**Authenticity 86%**
Despite the poor presentation, the mechanics seem to be well designed.

**Playability 70%**
Not for the uninitiated.

**Value for money 77%**
Is authenticity worth the lack of playability?

**Overall 79%**
Yes, if you're the patient type.

As I have stated before in this column, I'm a great fan of role playing games as well as wargames. The two have a lot in common. In fact the very first RPG, *Dungeons and Dragons* was conceived as a one to one wargame. The more popular RPGs often have sets of wargame campaign rules published as expansions to the original game. Computer RPGs are often set across a backdrop of war or political intrigue. In the conventional market the two types of game have begin to co-exist very closely, despite initial reservations by many hard core wargamers.

Slowly, computers and role playing are becoming more closely merged, although the the potential of combining the two hobbies has never yet been fully realised. No matter how good the computer RPG is, hardcore role players still take pains to point out the inherent simplicity and limitations of any game restricted to 64K or slightly more. There is a degree of logic to this — after all, the most powerful computers would have difficulty providing all the options open to a conventional gamer due to the necessity for complex AI routines. The one advantage of computer RPGs is that they provide an excellent medium for the solo gamer.

There are more down to earth problems as well. Both hobbies are expensive. We all know that setting up a powerful Commodore based system can cost the better part of three hundred pounds. If you were to buy all the official *Dungeons and Dragons* rules material, the cost would probably be higher. With computers, you then have the problem of expensive software. With conventional games you have the cost of dice (which is obscenely high) and miniatures, and a host of other optional extras. Consequently, there is little crossover between the two hobbies.

And yet they can benefit from each other tremendously. The computer could be used as an expert system which could do much of the hard work normally left to the referee. Or it could act as a database, a quick reference guide for the referee. The computer gamer could find himself with more advanced and fulfilling games where social interaction could begin to play a part. The popularity of both adventure and strategy games tends to suggest that a lot of people would be interested.

Play by mail games are the only area where the computer is extensively used to provide the players with a gaming environment and a detailed rules system. The player can therefore express what he wants to do in the game without becoming bogged down in the mechanics, simply because he is not made aware of them. Multi-user dungeons work in a similar fashion, but they are more complex still because the player needs to be able to interact with the computer.

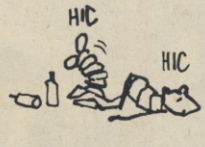
While the long lived CBM64 is unlikely to be capable of running a MUD system, using it as a powerful referee's aid is easily within its capabilities. Next month, Michael Jampel will be reporting from a wargames convention that took place in London, where several games were moderated by computers with no more ability than the Commodore (in fact one computer had far less capability). And I will outline plans for a computer moderated role playing game where you can get involved. See you then.

# A SECOND CHANCE TO WIN SOME HARDWARE WITH ZZAP!

Sadly, only a few entries for the Design a Droid comp have so far arrived in ZZAP! Towers, so we haven't scampered out and commissioned Ludlow Droid-smiths to knock up a few prototypes just yet — although by the look of the first few entries we could be onto a good thing here...

To celebrate the imminent departure of the old working practices amongst the ZZAP! reviewers — who have been thoroughly scared by the threat of new technology presented by last month's competition — we held a little celebration. For the last time ever, a monster order for sarnies, trifle, chicken legs, sossie rolls and pork pies was placed with the the purveyors of ZZAP! foodstuffs and everyone was invited round for a boogie.

The party went with a swing — even though the old tyres hanging from the ceiling on chains were specially removed for the occasion. And to record the event for posterity, an ace lensperson patrolled the party snapping away, taking candid shots of all the guests — who included none other than gorgeous pouting softwarehouse-person Flathead Andy from Activision.




The broad expanse of back dominating the picture reproduced here belongs to none other than Graeme 'Zaphod' Kidd, editor of ZZAP!s sister publication, CRASH, while in the background Artroom person Gordon Druce watches the proceedings in a cool and casual manner from behind a cup of Old Flatulence Bitter.

Andy, showing his true star potential, spotted the paparazzi lensman across the room and struck his special pose, winning smile and all for the camera.

What we want you to do, dear readers, is to come up with a suitable caption for this group shot of household names (on a par with Vim and Brasso) at play. Sender of the wittiest caption or funniest words for Flathead Andy to utter wins their choice of 128 starter pack or C64/1541 as well as a ZZAP! Hat and Sweatshirt. Six more caption writers will collect their very own Hat and Sweatshirt ensemble, tastefully adorned with the ZZAP! logo, so don't forget to put your shirt size on the entry form.

CAPTION:

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Captions in, please, to GORGEOUS POUTING FLATHEAD COMP, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB to arrive on or before June 12th.

ZAP COMP

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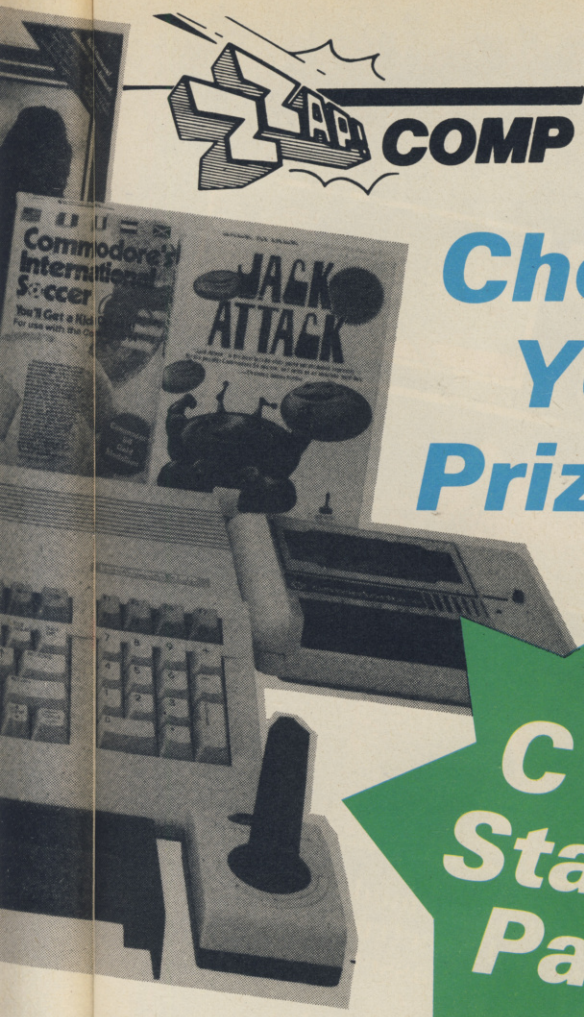


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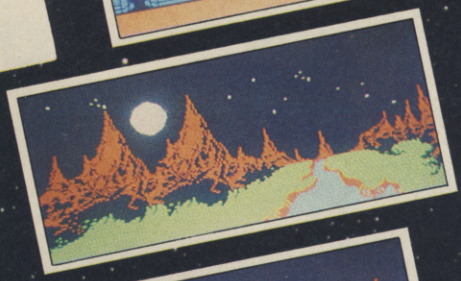

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# WIN A PRESENTATION SWORD PLUS 30 "DOMARKED FOR LIFE" T Shirts on offer for runners-up

The chaps down at **Domark** are almost ready to release a Commodore version of their combat game *Gladiator* which features a vast menu of weapons for you to choose from before entering the arena and doing battle.

The scenario sets you in the position of a humble slave in Roman days who has entered the Arena Circuit in the hope of becoming a star of Fight Night on Channelus Fourus and winning his freedom. Which is all rather like the position your humble Comps Minion finds himself in — sold into slavery at ZZAP! Towers, I have little chance of ever winning my freedom, no matter how hard I fight in the daily round of elastic band battles that rage across the tops of monitors and computers in the office.

The ZZAP! crew get so much fan mail, you see, that the local post office has to use giant laccy bands to bundle the envelopes together. The reviewing yobboes think it great sport to flick these bungy bands around the office with the aim of delivering stinging blows to the anatomy of their colleagues. When they tire of the nice straightforward one on one band fights, they all gang up on this Minion and I find myself the target of a veritable fusillade of rubber.

What I need, dear readers, is a little help. There's no way I can realistically fight back against the combined elasticated might of Messrs Liddon, Penn, Rignall and Masterson. Being human, and not blessed with extra manual appendages, I can only fire one bungy band at a time. So could you design a device for me to aid my struggles? A sort of bungy band gatling gun is what I have in mind.

The most efficient laccy band weapon design will win its designer the delightful Windsor presentation sword on offer from Domark — and is being made by Wilkinson Sword, no less. Thirty more designer type people will be awarded their very own "Domarked for Life" T shirt, so remember to put your shirt size on your entry before you send it to MINION FIGHTS BACK, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB. And make sure your designs arrive by June 12th — I can't stand the pain much longer

## Design a Combat Implement and win a prize!

NAME .....

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**Okay, you've been great, wonderful, helpful — now we know how much of the real thing you drink, how many 7s go up and loads of other useless bits and bobs. On the other hand, we've learned some interesting facts about what you, the readers, think of ZZAP! 64. It's been a bit of a rush getting all the forms collated, so rather than wait for the thousands to be processed, a great, wonderful, helpful Gary Sumpter D-Based himself close to extinction to process a representative (as they say in all polls) selection of 500 forms. Here are the answers.**

Right, to kick off with, we asked you how many of the last ten issues of ZZAP! you bought. Of course we know **you** bought them all, but our representative selection told us that **7%** bought less than 3 of the ten, **15%** lashed out for 4 or 5 issues, **25%** waded into between 6 and 8 issues, while **52%** bought 9 or 10 issues. Well done the 52% — keep up the good work!

Always an interesting fact for publishers — how many people who do not actually buy a magazine, nevertheless read it by borrowing someone else's copy. In the case of ZZAP! The average came out at 3.5 readers for every purchased copy, which means that with ZZAP's last audited figures for the July/December 85 period of 42,973, we have a total readership figure of 148,256. In fact the highest number of borrowing readers anyone offered was 12. (Publishers message — listen you 12, go and buy your own copy)!

Another one for the publishers — how do you buy your copy, by subscription, reserved or delivered by a newsagent, or over the counter? This held few surprises, as 17% are subscribers, 29% reserve a copy and 54% buy it over the counter.

Next we asked you what other computer titles you buy regularly. In the popularity polls *Computer & Video Games* game out tops. Close behind was *Commodore User* followed by *Your Commodore*. The fourth place was taken up by a host of other titles, leaving *Commodore Horizons* in fifth place, *Computer Gamer* in sixth, *Popular Computing Weekly* in seventh, *Commodore Computing International* in eighth place and *Popular Computer World* in ninth place. After that the listings became meaningless in percentage terms.

To the question asking whether you intend buying another computer in the next six months, came the reply **YES 89%, NO 11%**. Sounds healthy for the hardware people.

Okay, onto the interesting visceral bits. Moving onto ZZAP! itself, we asked you to give marks out of 10 for 20 main headings in the magazine, thus indicating a preference for the sections. Here we go then, in traditional chart run down reverse order. Bottom of the list (gasp, shock horror) in the number 20 slot came **Compunet** (there's obviously communication philistines out there)! **Shadow Spiel** followed up a close number 19, prompting Julian Rignall to say that our readers don't appreciate art — Gary Liddon's remark is unprintable owing to the state of the weather. **The Terminal Man** polled fairly low, slotting in at number 18, while at 17 came **articles relating to hardware**. The 16 position was filled by **Programmer/company profiles** and **Editorial** made it in at number 15.

**Chronicles of the White Wizard** entered at 14, **ZZAP! Strategy** at 13, **ZZAP!Back** made number 12, 11 was (wait for it) **Adverts**, and to take us to the half way mark, at 10, their first time in the charts, **General Articles** (great sounds General).

Into the top half with the awesome **Scorelord** at number 9. **News** (when there is any) polled the number 8 slot, closely followed by **The ZZAP! Challenge** at 7. Lloyd Mangram was pleased to see that **ZZAP! Rrap** made 6 and the ever popular **Competitions** made number 5. Heavy Metal dominates the top of the chart with **Previews** at number 4 and **The Top 30** at number 3. The two top slots went to **Arcade Game reviews** at 2, just pipped by the over the moon, over the top GP at number one with **Playing Tips**.

Make what you will of all this — we'll have a close scrutiny as well!

Other features you would like to see in ZZAP! ran to almost ten pages of suggestions, many of them ludicrous like the reader who wants to see 'more nude women cricketers on the cover' (when was the last time we did one of those)? Predictably the most 'mores' were for colour, reviews, screen shots, competitions, discounts *et al*. So what's new? Interestingly, although hardware articles came out low in the chart, lots of people asked for more hardware features. Can't win, can you?

We asked you what you thought of the ZZAP! reviews. Of the rating system currently used **76.25%** thought it good, **21.75%** thought it average and a measly **2%** reckoned it to be bad.

How often do you agree with the ratings? Well **9.29%** always do. A satisfying **78.64** do quite often, **11.3%** do so occasionally, and **0.8%** never do.

How much do ZZAP! reviews influence you when you are buying a game? **25.87%** said Every Time, while **56.03%** are influenced Quite Often. **16.33%** said Now and Then and **1.77%** said Never!

Do you think the reviews are okay as they are? A good majority think they are, **60.05%** to be precise. **5.02%** want less detail, and **34.92%** would like to see more detail. On the screen shots the figures are reversed because an overwhelming **74.68%** want more of them, **22.08%** think it's okay as it is and only **2.25%** want less.

On the reviewers' opinions a satisfying **59.79%** things should stay as they are, while **25.37%** would like more. Leaving **14.57%** who think GazzaJazzaGazzaPaul and Sean are verbose.

Length of the reviews? **61.8%** reckon they're right as they are; **30.4%** would like them longer and **7.53%** think they should be shorter. Once again, ideas for improving reviews are too many to quote here, and will be investigated over the next few weeks, but a few included loading times, individual reviewers marks, an animation rating and some more technical comments like in CRASH .

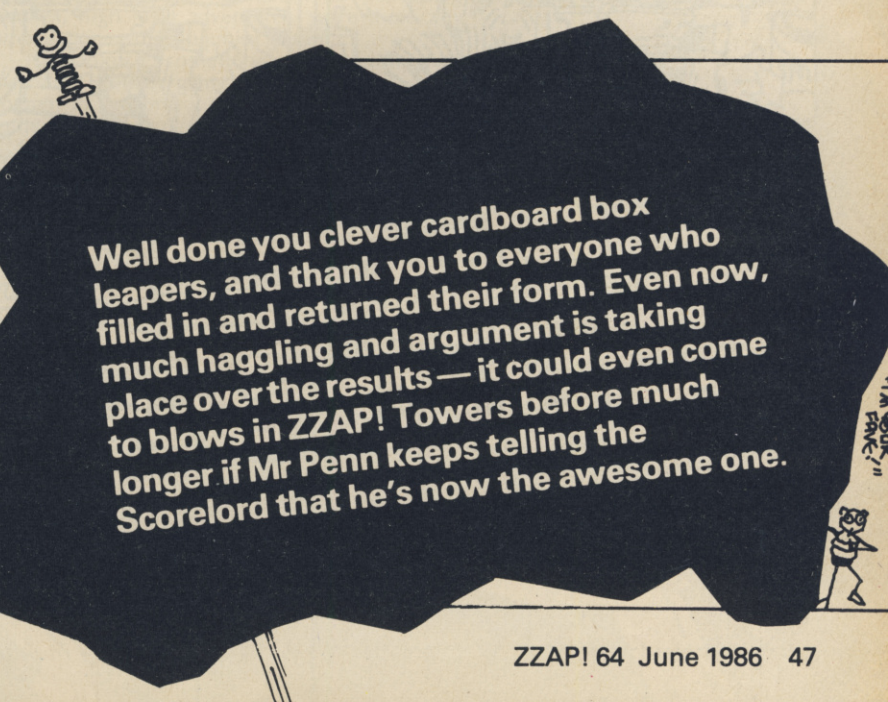
The section About You is still being collated at present, so sadly we cannot give an average readership age for ZZAP! (although we already know it's about 12 — thanks for the 'on the cloven hoof' gallop poll Jeff). Seriously, the last CRASH questionnaire surprised everyone by indicating an average age of just over 17.5, slightly older than was anticipated, and there seems no reason to suppose that ZZAP's will be much different. More detail to follow on the second section when when we have it.

Onto the Vitally Important Bit. ZZAP! offered a small bribe to get you to fill in the forms (obviously it didn't work, as everyone seems to have been uncompromising honest, dash it all). For the outright winner (the person most skilled at being pulled out of a giant cardboard box first) there is £60 worth of software to be chosen as well as a jog suit, a ZZAP! Sweatshirt, a ZZAP! cap and a twelve month subscription to ZZAP! Four runners up get £12 worth of software, a twelve month ZZAP! subscription, a ZZAP! cap and T-shirt. The remaining five runners up collect their very own T-shirt. Here they are:

The winner is: **Kevin Harrison, York YO1 4NJ**

The four next runners over are: **M Moses, Middlesex, HA8 8NS; Stephen King, Cumbria, LA8 8H3; Tony Chappell, Kent, BR5 1LD; Steve Lee, Surrey, GU2 5UT.**

And the final five consist of : **Mr Shingler, Warwickshire, CU11 4RF; Lee Edridge, Derby, S43 4LZ; Chris Wragg, Sussex, BN14 9LW; John Warburton, Surrey, KT21 2LR; Andrew Russell, West Sussex, PO22 7JX**



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ZZAP! COMP

Watch as things disappear before your very eyes...

**Marvel at the power of a Pet Black Hole!**

Don't get in a tizz! Dizzy with their success — Gold Medal Game this month, 98% no less — **Electric Dreams** are offering thirty copies of their latest whizzo release for ZZAP! readers to win.

Spinning round, bumping off hostile objects and negotiating hazardous terrain is all part of the daily round for a Competition Minion — it's simply not fair. Electric Dreams should really have called their latest release *The Minion's Game* if they wanted to go for accuracy. The terrain in the ZZAP! offices is far from easy to negotiate, with half empty pop bottles and crisp packets littering the floor around Mr Liddon's desk and Julian's wheelbarrow parked next to his chair. Wheelbarrow? Didn't you realise how he gets his ego up the hill and into the office in the morning. Oh dear...

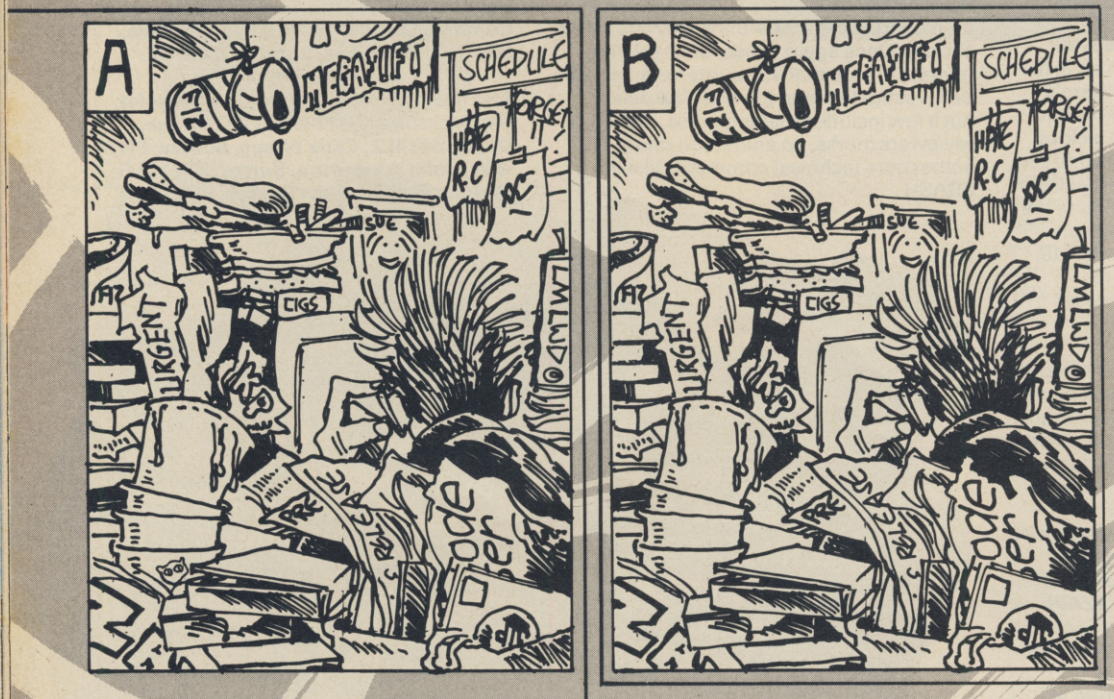
Then there's the Masterson Zone, reputedly used as a model for Vogon Spacecraft in Hitch Hiker's, where half finished pieces of mind-numbingly boring strategy poems scrawled on the back of FINAL DEMAND: PAY UP OR WE'LL SHORTEN YOUR TINY LEGS SOME MORE envelopes. Fortunately, the poison dwarf seems to exist largely without food (or his eating habits resemble a Hoover), for his is the only desk-space uncluttered with the remains of half finished snackettes.

'Girly' Penn, who regularly comes to work with a nightie under his shirt (further details should be in **The Shadow**'s column this month) is attempting to beat the laws of physics in his tiny area of ZZAP! Towers. There is a theory that states if the mass of an object or collection of objects approaches a sufficiently great density, then that object or group of objects will meld into a super dense body which cannot be seen and attracts and swallows all other objects in the vicinity. Once swallowed, passing objects or artefacts will never again be seen.

By dint of piling scraps of paper, press releases, coke cans, fag packets, empty matchboxes and the contents of the office waste paper bins (always empty) onto his desk, Girly is trying to create his own black hole. It's early days yet, but the experiment is beginning to work — anything put down within five feet of Girly's desk will never be seen again....

So you can see, the trivial little courses that have to be negotiated by the whirling doobrie that features in *Spindizzy* are nothing as compared with the daily round of a Competition Minion's life. And it doesn't have to carry great boxes full of competition entries as it weaves its way round the awkward bits. Pah!

Just to give you a flavour of the world in which your ever-faithful Minion has to try to carry out his daily tasks, Oliver Frey has put together a bijou sketchette of Girly's Pet Black Hole. Unfortunately, the power of the melding force has worked on the drawing — a copy was taken to print on this page and then we noticed that the original sketch was missing a few items. Can you spot them on the copy, marked A here? Ring them round and send in your spotted differences on the entry form, to GIRLY PENN'S PET BLACK HOLE COMP, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB to arrive by 12th June when the first thirty all correct solutions win a copy of *Spindizzy* for their senders. Just hope that power of the Black Hole doesn't cause your entry to suck itself in while the postie's bringing it to us!

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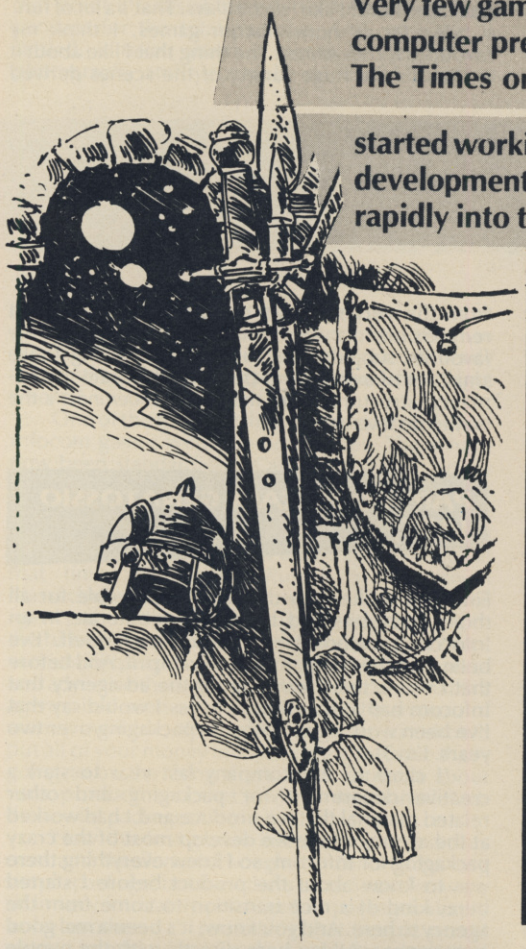
**Sean Masterson**

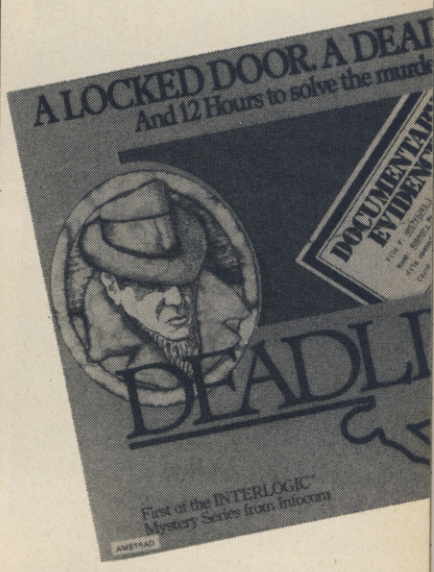
**Very few games get reviewed in magazines or journals outside the specialist computer press like ZZAP! You won't find many platform game reviews in The Times or in Punch. But you could find an Infocom review. Infocom started working in the late seventies, formed out of an Artificial Intelligence development team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and grew rapidly into the most respected software house in the world.**



# FOUR MINDS FOREVER VOYAGING

## Part Two

**The famous American adventure games writing outfit INFOCOM is generally shy and retiring, but in last month's phone interview marathon with Dave Lebling and Steve Meretzky, SEAN MASTERSON learned something about how Infocom go about designing their games. In this concluding part, the receiver is handed over to two more vital cogs in the Infocom machinery.**




### PART THREE: STU GALLEY (SENIOR GAME DESIGNER)

When Stu Galley came on the line, I asked him how the company actually worked. One of the things that has been said about Infocom is that there are no real bosses. 'Yeah, I think that's fair to say. Anyway, in my group, as game designers, we're very co-operative. I think there's very little difference in status.

'Typically, the whole process of game design takes nine to twelve months. Say from conception to end. The conception will start with an idea — either one that the designer has himself or from talking with a collaborator or whatever. But in many ways I think it's like writing a long work of fiction, anything that takes that long. Starting with the process of outlining, typically the designer will write a synopsis of a few pages, sort of an outline and it tells the important ideas and features that this game will have. And that's passed round for comment and we get together once there's the go ahead. Then we spend two or three months making the first draft of the program so to speak.

'Our group meets once a week at least, for lunch and talking over the status of different games that are being developed and whatever other issues have to be discussed. You know, usually, at least one or two things — er design issues are brought up that need to be discussed. Even at the early stage, the conceptual stage, a meeting like that can be really useful for er . . . I was just trying to finish my sentence and I forgot the word . . . brainstorming!'

Stu had a first for the company with *Seastalker*. Given the company's reputation for producing complex, high level adventures, were there any complications writing a junior game?

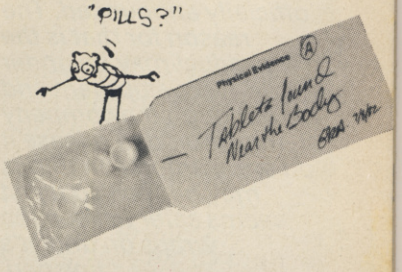
'No, I think it's something of a higher standard to write a simpler game because I wanted the program to respond intelligently to the kinds of inputs that the younger players are apt to use. We did a bit of testing with some actual live kids here in the office and er . . . one of the things that I discovered about younger players is that they use a big variety of different sentence structures, sort of more colloquial or more ungrammatical inputs. And I wanted to be able to do something helpful with a situation like that while at the same time, sort of . . . I didn't want to accept really ungrammatical commands because I wanted to set a good example to the player.

'On the other hand, I found that kids could and would use commands that adults would never think of. So in a way, I think that the standard of friendliness and fun was maintained as far as I can see.

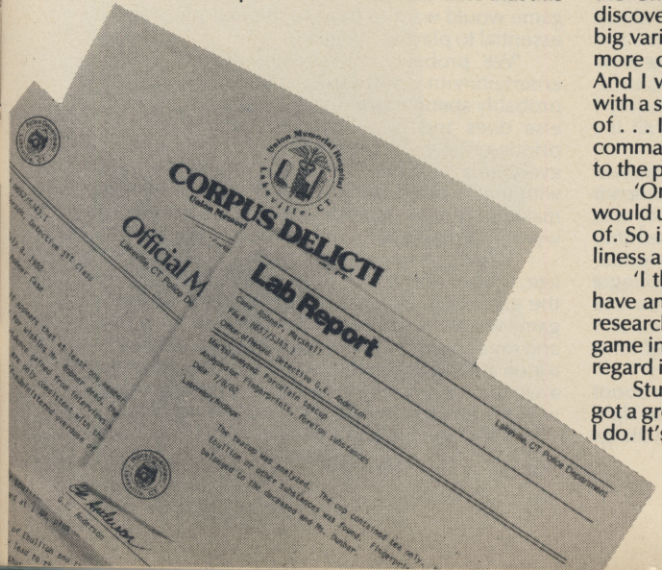
'I think that all kinds of people play it. I don't have any market research at my fingertips or sales research but I know that, I've seen reviews of the game in magazines written by adults and they often regard it as just as puzzling just as much fun.'

Stu sounded so enthusiastic — I assumed he got a great deal of pleasure from his work. 'Yes, yes I do. It's funny, it's almost like a dream fulfilled but

*One of the things that I discovered about younger players is that they use a big variety of different sentence structures, sort of more colloquial or more ungrammatical inputs.*




*It's almost like a dream fulfilled but up until a few years ago, I had no idea that this was what my dream was because I had no examples to go by.*



up until a few years ago, I had no idea that this was what my dream was because I had no examples to go by.'

I was surprised to hear about his immediate reactions after a game had been finished. I had assumed there would be a celebratory mood but apparently, this was not the case. 'Well frankly the immediate feeling is a bit of a let down. I think, of course there's a feeling of relief that, you know it's like finishing a year at university, getting all of the exams out of the way. I'd say a let down because there's no immediate feedback — whether you did a good job or not. Once the programming is finished, then there's a couple of months at least, before there's feedback from players or reviewers. It really would be more like six months to a year before one gets the feeling of job well done or whatever.'

So what did he have planned for the future? Were there any exciting ideas for a new game? 'Yes there is actually. Let's see. I'm not too sure how much I should say about this as it might turn into a product. I've at least one — probably several. Personally I'd like to reach new segments of the audience by making each new game innovative or appealing in a different way from all the others so that someone who had maybe tried *Zork* or tried a mystery and not gotten excited about it might find something really interesting in a different sort of game.

'I think all categories of popular fiction would be fun to make into games. Personally I would like it to be just interactive fiction. Well, writing interactive fiction plus is a two edged sword, because while you have a lot more room to do things in you also have the problem of taking on a bigger project and having a lot more work to do to get all the details right. I sort of prefer a smaller scope, something more like a stage play instead of a movie. I think the confines are helpful in some ways.

'Well actually I did work on a game that I spent about six months on and then decided to shelve it, so to speak — to put it aside. The problem there, was that the story line wasn't sufficiently well developed to make it really interesting. I guess I had a vision of a certain kind of atmosphere in the writing that was rather hard to bring off and after some testing in house here, it became clear that that it would need some significant changes to make it work right. I'm glad we're able to do that and we don't have to forge ahead with something that doesn't really work well.'

Infocom appear as a very secretive organisation. I asked Stu whether this profile was intentional? 'Yes, I think it's generally true of American software companies particularly that they don't comment on new products until they're officially announced. And I think the reason for that is because of the last question we talked about where the product may be under development and although the company may intend to release it on time, unforseen things may happen and it has to be postponed or cancelled. So it just seems safer, I guess, to keep the wraps on a product until it's finished.'

*American software companies don't comment on new products until they're officially announced. The reason for that is the product may be under development and although the company may intend to release it on time, unforseen things may happen so it just seems safer to keep the wraps on until it's finished.*

When I asked Stu what his favourite game was he pointed out that one of them wasn't an Infocom game. No problem, said I, just tell us what they are. 'It's just that the other times I've been asked that question, usually Infocom games are excluded. Okay, it's very hard to say, really. It's like asking a parent to pick a favourite child. Each are favourites in different ways. I still enjoy *Witness* for certain aspects of it, although I now feel that I could have done it a lot better. That was my first one.

'*Seastalker* is similar. I like certain things about it very much. I like the game I'm working on right now in many ways. There are a lot of different things about it. Er . . . I'm looking at my shelf full of packages here! I like *Hitch Hikers*. That's a lot of fun.

'As far as non-Infocom games, I think my favourite is *Loderunner*. The thing that I like about it is that it's the huge variety of the scenes derived from this very small set of building blocks and it reminds me in a way of mathematics — one of my favourite subjects, because it's like taking those small set of axioms and deriving elaborate mathematical structures from them. But *Loderunner*'s the way to do it visually.'

## PART FOUR: CARL GENATOSSIO (ART)

Finally, I spoke with the man responsible for all those crazy bits and bobs that proliferate in an Infocom game box. He can introduce himself. 'I've been with the company since last April. And before that I was actually working for the ad agency that Infocom had at that time. I guess I would say that I've been working on Infocom packaging over two years. I'm 31.

'I came to the company last year to start a creative department for packaging and other related material that we produce and I had worked at the agency where we develop most of the crazy packaging for Infocom, so I knew everything there was to know about the product before I started here, kind of a nice transition to come from the agency to here. And you know, it's been a real good experience working here directly with the people because everyone is so creative so, it's a totally creative environment. I'm not at a lack for having any ideas what to do. Just from talking to the people around here, you know.'

One of the clever aspects of game packaging is the way Infocom hide protection within the package rather than the program. Carl commented on this. 'Well that's worked out better on some games than on others. Sometimes we'll get a real good idea for an anti-pircay device. I don't know if you have seen *AMFV*. The secret decoder wheel in that is really essential to play the game. It's something like 360 random number access combinations. It's not something you can xerox a copy of. It's not something you can pass on to a friend and forget about because, you really need that to play the game.'

It had occurred to me that the decoder wheel was similar to *Sorcerer*'s Infotator. 'No that was done by someone else at the ad agency. That was prior to my involvement on Infocom games. But you can see that we do put a lot of thought into devices that actually, the person who buys the game would want to have in the first place and it's essential to playing the game.

'We probably, out of any software or any entertainment software company, yeah we probably spend more on the package than anyone else does and er — we have very high quality printing; again a lot of thought is put behind everything that goes into the package in general. So with that in mind, we just put in the extra effort to make up a protection device that is attractive and works quite well and fits the mood of the game.'

'Usually, from concept to finally printed package, it takes about four months. We start out when the game is in alpha testing. We get a look at the game when the internal tester takes a look at it. Me and my copywriter in the marketing department get a look at the game at that point. We play it for about a week or so and then we have a creative meeting with the game writers and the marketing dept.

'We come up with a creative focus for what the

packaging should be as it relates to the game and at that point it takes about two to three weeks for a concept for the total package. And once that is settled, it takes about a month to get art and photography and typography done and from that point I'd say that once art has started and all of that and copy is written, it takes about another month to put all the boards together to get the material ready for printing. The printing process takes about eight weeks.'

One of the most startling visual aspects of older Infocom games were the box shapes. These have now been standardised. Carl made several points about the reasons for this. 'I can speak about the original packages a bit because I know somewhat about that. When Infocom first started out as a company, they had come to the ad agency which at that time was Giardini-Russell in Watertown Massachusetts. Anyway, they had come to the agency at the time and the agency was very big in the hi tech field and and they (Infocom) only had a very small budget. They said, 'How do we market and advertise these games?' And based on what the agency had seen of the games and the amount of money available, they said, 'Basically, you should put all of your money into packaging because that's going to be the thing that's most noticable about your product' and that's where we started with these wild packages.

'Now the first games like *Suspended* and *Starcross* and the *Zorks* (although the *Zorks* had a very simple package) but the others up to *Seastalker* were all in very intricately put together packages simply to be another . . . something that people would want to touch and hold and get into! But what killed those packages was the fact that the dealers couldn't stack a flying saucer on a shelf very well! They kept falling off and rolling in the aisles, you know?'

So did Carl find any constraints with new packing? 'No I don't as a matter of fact. You know we've standardised the boxes as you can see but each one of those packages is individual. I approach them as an individual problem and I find that there is very little repetition in what I do, even though the format is the same. I am basically free to do whatever I want to do. For instance, we're doing something right now in, we're working on the *Trinity* game, I don't know if you know about that one. Well we're doing something new in that the manual in that game is going to be a comic book. I don't know how familiar you are with comic books — are you familiar with the **Classics Illustrated**?'

No — unfortunately . . .

'Well, okay, that's a comic book series that was out in this country in the late fifties and early sixties and what they were like were sort of comic book versions of history books. So this game, *Trinity* which is a fantasy game, has a lot of reference to historical information, so we're doing a full colour comic book in a Classic style. I'm always working with different people. That's what I think keeps the packaging fresh and challenging, certainly for me to work on. I find each one to be just like starting a whole new thing.'

Was there a particularly memorable design that Carl had worked on? 'I would have to say, probably *Suspect* because of the art style for one. I went with a literary style — a high brow literary style and because of all the pieces that went inside that, the invitation, the receipt for the costume, the magazine article — and the article in particular, I wanted it to have a look about it so it would actually look as if it had been ripped from the pages of a magazine, so we had to make a special bad cut for that so that it was consistent with every one that we printed. That one happens to be my favourite and it was one of the first that had to be designed for the new format so I feel that it works really well because I put a lot of thought into it.'

I asked him how was it decided where the booklet would stop and the bits would start. 'There's a photograph on the back of every package which shows you what you get inside the box, and usually those things are not created until after the package has been printed. So what I have to do is make mock ups of those things and that's probably the most difficult part of the whole packaging thing, creating and photographing those items in an interesting scene to give you the mood for the game.

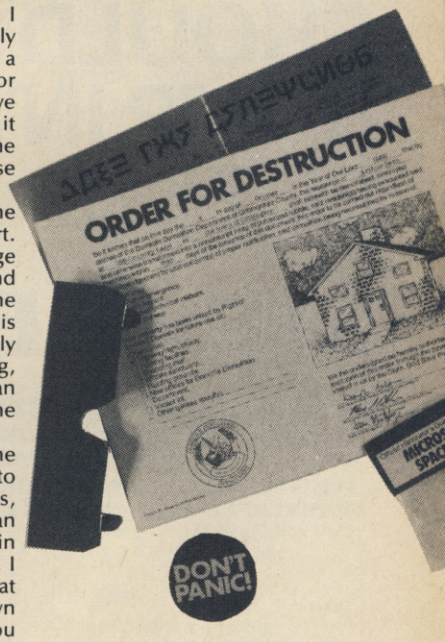
'We try to do something different every time we work on a game and I guess I don't know how to answer that except to say that whatever happens, we're always looking into other things. It's an ongoing thing from day to day. If I see something in a magazine or in a toy store or a book store . . . I have a tremendous collection of little items that might be interesting for something further on down the line, somewhere, sometime, somehow, you know?

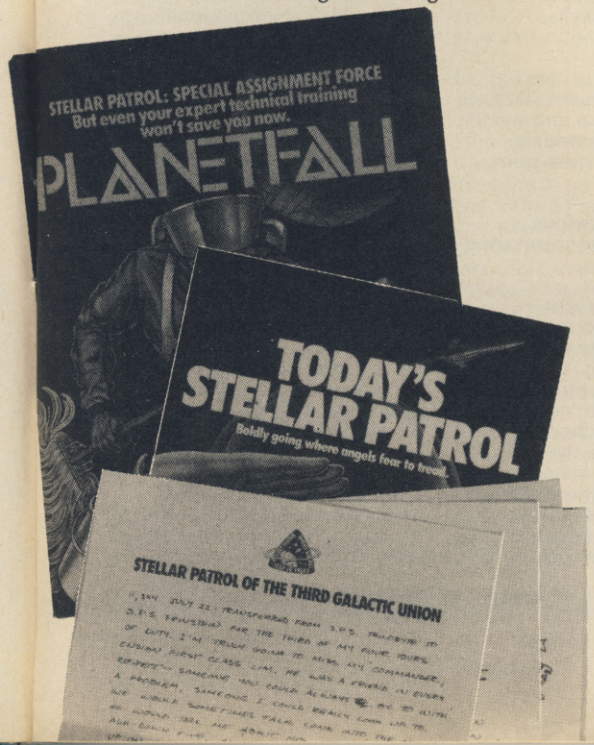
'When I'm busy I never keep track of the time. When I first came here they had held the work for me. They were waiting for me to come in because I was coming over from the agency. When you're really rolling on something worthwhile then time doesn't matter. That's another reason why it made sense to come here and start this department, because the way an agency works, they bill by the hour. My time is virtually unlimited here and I get a chance to do everything that I want to do and sit down and nit pick without worrying how much time I'm spending on it.

'It's a sort of perfectionist's type of job. You can come here at two in the morning and there'll be someone here. There's someone working around the clock. When you get dedicated people like that and it's a fun job, I mean it doesn't make any difference how long you . . . well, how many hours you put in and we have a flexible atmosphere as long as you get your job done and have a good time with it.'

Time was ticking on and my throat was becoming dry. Thanking the folks at Infocom, I placed the the receiver down and made my way to the Bull Inn to rehabilitate. As the old flatulence bitter trickled down my throat, I knew that a ball of fluff would never be the same again.

*What killed those packages was the fact that the dealers couldn't stack a flying saucer on a shelf very well! They kept falling off and rolling in the aisles, you know?*

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# THERE I WAS, WALKING DOWN THE HIGH STREET, WHEN WHO SHOULD I BUMP INTO BUT . . .

# STEVE EVANS

**There's only one thing GARY LIDDON loves doing more than making the tea, and that's talking. So what better way of passing the time than inviting an incredibly famous programmer and a few friends back to his flat for some char and a chat . . .**

**Oh dear, Steve, I hear you've got a Capri.**

Well what's wrong with that?

**It's a bit of a boy racer's car, isn't it?**

Well, boy racer image, yes, but mine hasn't got fluffy dice and a green band saying 'Sharon and Darren'. It's just a straight Capri with a little bit of extra trimming, that's all.

Gary Sumpter: *You're a latent cuddly dice person really, aren't you?*

**Who me?**

I can picture you in an Escort, with a jacked up rear end and the lights and the differentials, leering at passing girls, going *'Awlriteluv?'*

**All right, OK, an obvious question: what got you started in programming?**

My first encounter with computers was a terminal linked to an IBM 370 at the school I used to go to when I was about thirteen. We had a terminal that was a teletype, with no VDU or anything. All the schools in the area were linked to the same machine and each school had it's allotted CPU time which everyone exceeded. If the time ran out then the job was just dropped. After that I got a ZX80 built from a kit and then I went onto a ZX81, and after that a BBC. On the ZX80 I built my own disco box where the ZX80 analysed the music and pulsed various lights. We wrote a couple of games and actually managed to write a flicker free game on the ZX80. For my ZX81 I got a 16K RAM pack — you had to stick things like cold milk on it to keep it from overheating.

**What was your first commercial game?**

It was actually a *Space Invaders* for the ZX81, it wasn't for a company though, just for a computer shop and I sold it off their shelf. I did about ten copies. After that, on the BBC, I did a *Missile Command* and that was three days after I got the machine. I took that into the same place and they sold about ten copies in three days. In it's day it was good, but now, well . . . I've still got the BBC and that's the only machine I actually own.

**What about games on the 64?**

The first thing I did on that was *Panic Planet*, a version of *Space Panic*. I was trying to get into the machine then. Then it was *Eagle Empire* and after that I did *Guardian*.

**That's one of my favourite games.**

I tried to capture the arcade

*Defender*, mostly through recreating the speed of the original. After that came *Rocket Roger*— I think I made a mistake in making it too hard. *Guardian* was OK as it gradually got harder, but *Rocket Roger* was far too difficult to start with.

**All your games seem to be fairly derivative.**

I know, but in the future a bit more on the originality front seems like a good idea.

**What do you like in the arcades at the moment?**

Um . . . *Gauntlet* is neat. That's good — I like the idea, it's really social. It's a bit expensive though, and before you know it you can pump tens of pounds into it. I don't go in arcades much anymore though, and I don't get a chance to see anything really new. *Dragon's Lair* is alright and I recently had someone show me how to do that all the way through. It's okay, but as with all video disc games, it's all yes/no decisions.

**What are you doing with your life at the moment then?**

I'm at University at the moment — in the second year studying for a degree in maths.

**What University?**

Oxford. I hate saying that. I usually say something like Leeds, since as soon as you say Oxford everyone goes 'OK yah, bad news time'. It's a good college I'm in though, it's fairly liberal. Most of the kids who go there are from comprehensives, but obviously there are a few who are the 'Hooray Henry' type who you avoid. I've no idea what I want to do after uni though.

**Do you think you're at a bit of a disadvantage not working within a programming team?**

When I'm working down at Oxford it's very difficult because it's just me and you don't get much in the way of constructive criticism. When I'm at Alligata, in Sheffield, it's a bit different though. I like to finish a game and feel 'I've done all that and no else is actually part of it'. I think overall though it's a bit of a disadvantage to work by yourself.

**Any ideas as yet for your next game?**

No, I'm having a bit of a rest after writing *Who Dares Wins II* on three machines.

**How do you feel about all the legal trouble with *Who Dares Wins*?**

It was a major blow for me because I had spent half of the whole summer on *Who Dares Wins* and it looked as though it was going to be a big hit. To be hit by that was a real blow to me.

**Is there anything you think is good within the software market?**

*Mercenary*, I don't know who wrote that.

**Paul Woakes, also author of *Encounter*.**

I admire it mainly for it's technical skill — the fast vector graphics system is pretty impressive — but also because of the way he's put it together. I heard the game is really nice, but I haven't had time to really see that. I haven't been in Sheffield for ten weeks though and I haven't seen a lot of the recent stuff.

**Why is it that all of Alligata's Commodore 64 programmers have blonde hair?**

They buy it in a bottle. It's not a contagious disease within Alligata. Who else is has got blonde hair though?

**Well, Tony Crowther for a start.**

His is totally dyed though, mine was streaked by my girlfriend. This is really rather embarassing, there was an old streak in the hair when she did it and when it came out the clash between the old streak and the new streak was so bad. All I could really do was rush to the nearest barbers with a paper bag over my head and say 'could you please do something with this?' That's why my hair's so short now.

**How do you see your profession progressing in the future?**

I'm not really sure. I think it'll stay as it is for a while longer.

**Do you plan to move onto any of the 16 bit machines at all?**

I thought about it, but there doesn't seem to be any one machine to go for as yet. I've heard the ST is pretty impressive, but I haven't seen one as yet. If those machines take off I can see the standard of software rocketing. Since I'm really a freelance programmer I've got to make sure that anything I do is going to be marketable, so I'll have to wait until they do take off.

**Don't you ever write stuff just for yourself?**

Yeah, I write the occasional thing, but I never write an actual game just for myself. I mean VDU screens — I don't actually like sitting in front of them that much.

**Then how do you approach a program? Do you just code from a financial point of view or for your own personal gratification?**

I've got to say it's a mixture of both there. I'd find it difficult to write a game if someone said we'd like this and I wasn't overly enthusiastic. It would take me ages. Usually by the end of a program you feel you'd rather be doing something else anyway. I don't get much time nowadays.

**I suppose with University and everything you don't.**

David Palmer: *It's the sixty bloody women that take up the time.*

*(Laughter all round)*

**Oh? This is interesting . . .**

Thank you Dave.

David Palmer: *It seems that Alligata and the degree course share a mutual relationship to combat the women.*

**You seem to be pretty good at multi-tasking.**

Well I've got a bit of a soft spot for women.

David Palmer: *In fact, you can put in the article: 'Oxford — watch your daughters'.*

Look, I've got a bad enough reputation as it is . . . (changing the subject totally) I'm a rower as well — as in Oxford v Cambridge, that sort of thing. You won't see me on the telly though, as they do six hours a day training and I can't afford that with women, programming and um . . . oh yes, maths. I thought I'd better throw that in, you don't ever get expelled from Oxford, you just don't get invited back. I'll be very annoyed if I don't get invited back after this article.

**Do you have any other hobbies?**

Yeah, quite a lot: squash, weight training — I have to do that for the rowing — a lot of tennis. I play most sports and I watch videos.

**It seems unusual to have a programmer who's into sports in any way at all. It doesn't seem to be the usual thing.**

I don't want to seem nasty, but a lot of people say 'I'd never believe you were a programmer, since most programmers . . .' Well, there's a stereotype and it does seem to stick. I don't seem to fit in.

**With most programmers the type of music they like seems to be constant, from coder to coder — what do you like?**

It varies . . . Jean Michel Jarre, Japan — good group that, I like their early stuff. I like a lot of different types, I don't just hang on one group and everything they do.

**Anything else you'd like to be asked?**

Oh, that's a good question! Um . . .

David Palmer: *He'd like to produce a proper arcade game.*

That'd be good. I wouldn't mind thinking of a game idea, since they usually take the idea and then design and build the hardware around it to cope with it. With virtually unlimited hardware availability so you can have practically anything on the screen, you'd be able to do something pretty phenomenal, I would have thought. I wouldn't mind doing something pretty phenomenal.

David Palmer: *To come up with something like* Guardian *though, I wouldn't think that you would need all of that.*

**The thing about *Guardian* though, is that it was an excellent exercise in compromise.**

I had to keep it at speed, the whole game was fast and that was what kept it playable. Anyway, we must rush now since my Capri is in need of a new wing and I've got pick one up from the local garage.

**Bye then.**

**Cast of players (in order of appearance):**

**Gary Liddon**, humble tea boy at Zzap! offices.
**Steven Evans**, freelance programmer for Alligata.
**Gary Sumpter**, office minion.
**David Palmer**, big cheese at Alligata.

**Steven Evans 'softography' in chronological order:**

*Panic Planet*: a version of *Space Panic* that appeared too early for ZZAP! to review.
*Eagle Empire*: a *Phoenix* type game that also escaped evaluation by the terrible trio.
*Guardian*: Past Blasted in issue eleven where it picked up a whopping great 95%
*Rocket Roger*: Past Blasted in ZZAP!'s sixth issue where it collected 82% overall.
*Who Dares Wins II*: Sizzled in ZZAP! issue eight with an overall of 90%

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# ZZAP! TIPS

Gary Penn

"THE ONE AND ONLY..."

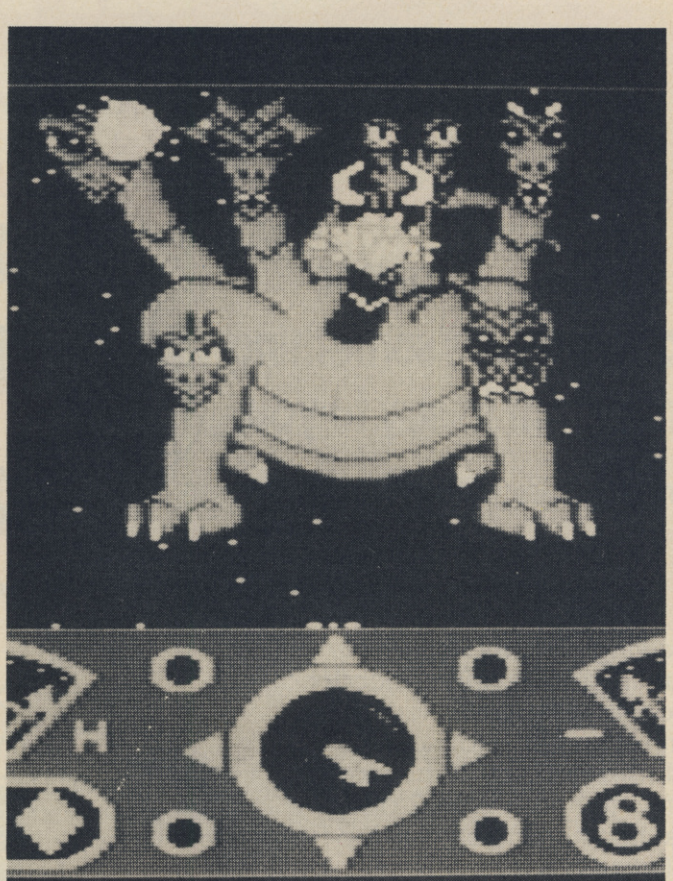
**Awlrite My son!? Do me a favour! Squeeze me a lemon! Knock it on the 'ead! Leave it out! Do wot! Do wot? Hello again, it's me. Yes, the strange guy with the funny hair and simpleton's grin (shouldn't that read 'the simpleton with the funny hair and strange grin'? — Ed). I'm here to give you a juicy selection of yummy tips 'n' things. This month there are maps of the last four levels of *The Eidolon* (yippee!) AND a map of *Doomdark's Revenge* (wow)! Enough of this idle banter and on with the tips . . .**

## URIDIUM (Hewson)

How would you like to finish *Uridium*? Yeah? OK, rewind the cassette and type in the following listing, as supplied by **Stephen Pegram** of Orpington, Kent.

```
10 PRINT CHR$(147)
20 FOR A=49152 TO 49202:READ B:POKE A,B:NEXT
30 SYS 49166
40 DATA 162, 20, 189, 33, 192, 157, 198, 224, 202
50 DATA 16, 247, 76, 0, 224, 32, 44, 247, 169, 0
60 DATA 141, 32, 208, 32, 108, 245, 169, 192, 141
70 DATA 239, 3, 76, 167, 2, 169, 76, 141, 65, 13
80 DATA 169, 249, 141, 66, 13, 169, 12, 141
90 DATA 67, 13, 108, 0, 128
```

Check it for errors, and if everything looks woopy doo then type **RUN (RETURN)**, press play on tape when prompted and wait for *Uridium* to load and run. Done that? Good. Now, if you play the game, you will find that you are invincible and can still shoot the aliens!



## THE EIDOLON (Activision)

This seven headed beauty is the dragon found on level eight. Ooh. Yes, he's not at all nice, in fact he's downright nasty. So how do you go about killing him, eh? Well, it all sounds quite simple, but believe you me, it most certainly isn't. This dragon is a meld of all of the other dragons previously encountered, so each head has to be disposed of in the same way as it was before. In other words, start off by shooting the dragon with three red fireballs to get rid of the first head, then four yellow fireballs, followed by five green, six blue, seven red, eight blue and nine red fireballs. Phew!

Watch your energy level doesn't fall too low, try not to panic, and make sure that you have someone tapping away on the space bar to collect any fireballs thrown at you by the dragon, as this is a great help. If all else fails, start praying!

## CRAZY COMETS (Martech)

If you're finding this game a little too hard, try these POKEs, from **Scott Moore** of Fixby, Huddersfield, for lots of extra lives. LOAD the game, reset the computer and enter the following.

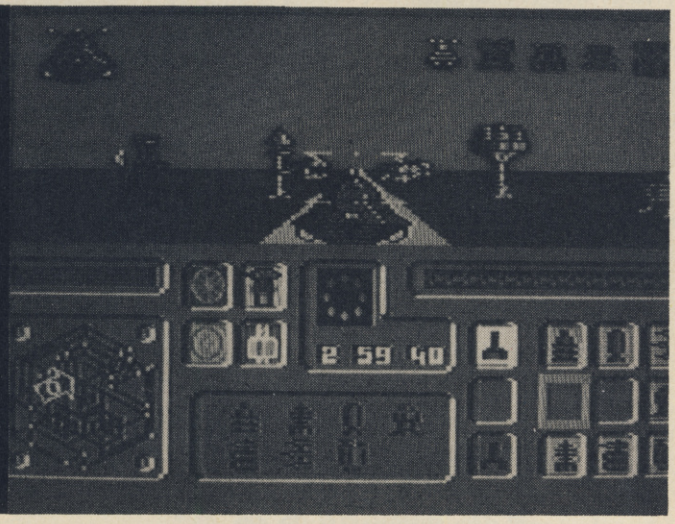
**POKE 37002,169 (RETURN)**
**POKE 37003,0 (RETURN)**
**POKE 37004,234 (RETURN)**

Type **SYS 24881 (RETURN)** to start. Now, every time you lose three lives you are given an extra 255 lives to squander!

## QUAKE MINUS ONE (Monolith)

After reading **CR McGibbon**'s helpful hints in issue 12, **John Ward** of South Norwood, London decided to send in a couple of his own . . .

- **The torpedo isn't the only effective weapon against installations — try the laser on conducting columns.**
- **Use mines instead of fireballs to destroy droids. You only need to use a single mine to instantly dispose of a droid, as opposed to two or three fireballs.**
- **Don't stop behind factories — pull up in front of them and you will rarely be taken by surprise.**



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## DIG DUG (US Gold)

Remove the *Dig Dug* cassette from its case, stick it in the cassette deck and rewind it. Now type **LOAD (RETURN)** and press play on tape. When the **READY** prompt appears enter these POKEs . . .

**POKE 1010,76 (RETURN)**
**POKE 1011,248 (RETURN)**
**POKE 1012,252 (RETURN)**
. . . followed by **RUN (RETURN)**.

After a short while the computer resets and you can type in the following . . .

**POKE 10465,(1-255)** number of lives **(RETURN)**

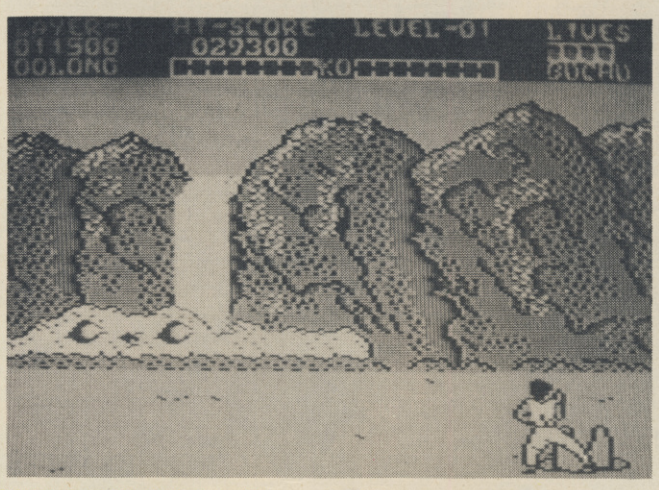
**SYS 2071 (RETURN)** starts the game. Thank you **Stephen Stockdale** of Hucknall, Notts.

## BIG MAC (Mastertronic)

Stephen also supplied a POKE for *Big Mac*. LOAD the game, reset the computer and enter:

**POKE 4170,(1-255)** number of lives **(RETURN)**

Type **SYS 19670 (RETURN)** to play the music usually heard throughout the game, or **SYS 19072 (RETURN)** to start.




## YIE AR KUNG-FU (Imagine)

Here's how **Mo O'Reilly** (this month's victorious challenger) disposes of all ten opponents . . .

**BUCHU**
Jump to the right (joystick top right) and apply repeated kicks to the head (fire button plus joystick up)

**STAR**
Jump to the right and apply repeated kicks to the head until she has been hit twice. Immediately jump up three times, then kick her in the head again until she is hit. Perform one more kick and jump up twice. Repeat until she is on her back.

**NUNCHA**
Jump to the right and apply fast leg sweeps until he falls. If he should escape, jump up, land on him and continue sweeping.

**POLE**
As above, but if he gets free, wait until he comes for you and drops his pole to shoulder height before you leg sweep again.

**CHAIN**
Jump to the right. Wait until he moves to your right before attacking him as outlined above.

**CLUB**
As above.

**FAN**
Jump to the right (yawn!) and wait until she moves to your right. Use continuous round-house kicks until she falls.

**SWORD**
Follow the CHAIN and CLUB method.

**TON FUN**
Keep jumping left and right until you land on him, then apply continuous leg sweeps to finish him off. If he gets free, start jumping again until you land on him, and carry on sweeping as before.

**BLUES**
Jump to the right (bet that surprised you). As BLUES jumps back to the right and is about to land, jump straight up. When you land, apply repeated leg sweeps. If he starts to hit you, pull the joystick diagonally down and away from him, then continue sweeping.

## TIME TUNNEL (US Gold)

Here are the complete solutions to three of the time zones. Thanks to **Mark Iraine** of Edinburgh who helped make these tips possible.

**9600 BC Stone Age**
Make sure that you have the lit torch before entering this time zone.

If we call the starting screen B, the screen to right, A, and the two screens to the left, C and D respectively, it will make things a bit easier. Right, OK, the solution . . .

Go to A and enter the cave. Get the log, take it to C and drop it next to the boulder so that the tip of the log rests just under it. Now go to C, shoot the rock at the top of the screen, get it and take it back to D. Drop the rock under the log. Go to A, shoot the small rock at the top of the screen, get it and take it to D.

Go to the top of the screen and drop the rock onto the log. If you set up the lever correctly then the big boulder will be pushed away, allowing you to enter the screen to the left, which we will call E. But first, go back to A and get the torch. Got it? Great, now you can enter the cave on screen E and get the piece of map therein. Take this piece of map back to Gnome Mansion and change the year to 9999. Go to this year and drop the piece of map there. That's 9600 BC completed . . .

Oh yes, you will need a couple of objects from 9600 BC — get the scorpion trap (looks like a grating) and the magic potion (in one of the caves), and stick them in the closet for safekeeping.

**1849 California Gold Rush**
Make sure that you have the lit torch before entering this zone.

Enter the Saloon (with the torch in hand) and get the small bag of oats. Leave the Saloon and lead the horse to the pulley system two screens away to your right (Dobbin likes his oats, you see). Go past the pulley, then turn round and walk to your left until the horse is standing on the 'conveyor belt' and the pulley turns. Drop the oats in front of the horse so that he has something to nibble on while he works.

Go left and enter the room just before the Blacksmiths. Pick up the cannister of compresed gas and drop it on the grey thing to your right. When the gas is released (it makes 'hissy' noises), stand in front of the blue lift and pull down. The scenery should change into a cave — if so, keep pulling down until you reach the bottom. Watch out for the bats! Shoot it as soon as you see it.

Get the scorpion trap from the closet and walk left as far as you can go. Drop the trap, go back to the lift and get the purple balloon. Go back up to the surface, fill the balloon with gas and go back down into the cave.

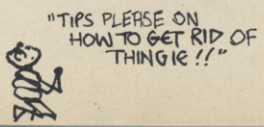
Take the balloon to the trap, attach it and the trap will rise. When the trap is over the scorpion, shoot the balloon. If your aim is good the scorpion should now be trapped. Yeah? Yeah! Good. Now you can walk left, straight past Mr Stingy, and get the piece of map in the next location. Watch out for falling stalactites and the bat, though! Take the piece of map to the year 9999 and you have completed 1849!

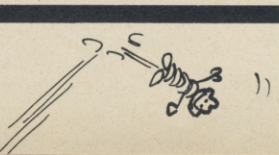
**3456 Intergalactic Spaceship**
Get the goblet lying on the table in Gnome Mansion and stick it in the closet. Go to 893 BC (Magical Persia) and get the jug to your left. Walk up onto the next screen, where you will see a woman on a magic carpet. Drop the jug at the very top of the screen. Get the goblet from the closet, drop it by the jug and the woman will exchange both objects for a blue key — stick it in the closet for safekeeping. Take this key back to Gnome Mansion and go to 3456 . . .

Walk down, and then right until you enter a location containing a cauldron. Get it and put it in the closet. Now go down. See those two levers, one either side of the screen? Push them both down with the fire button. Walk down until you get back to the bridge — notice anything different? Yep, the two doors are open. Go up to the blue square on the far left hand side of the control panel, get the glowing cross shaped thing and go through the red door to the right. Stick the cross in the hole to the far right — the left hand door will close and the right hand door will open.

Get the key from the closet and open the safe in the centre of the screen. Get the dynamite from the safe and put it in the closet. Now get the glowing pile of whateveritis, go through the right hand door and stick the stuff in the hole at the bottom of the screen. Stand on the circle to the far right and press fire — you will be transported to a far away planet. Get the piece of map, wait a bit and then take it to 9999 to finish 3546 . . .

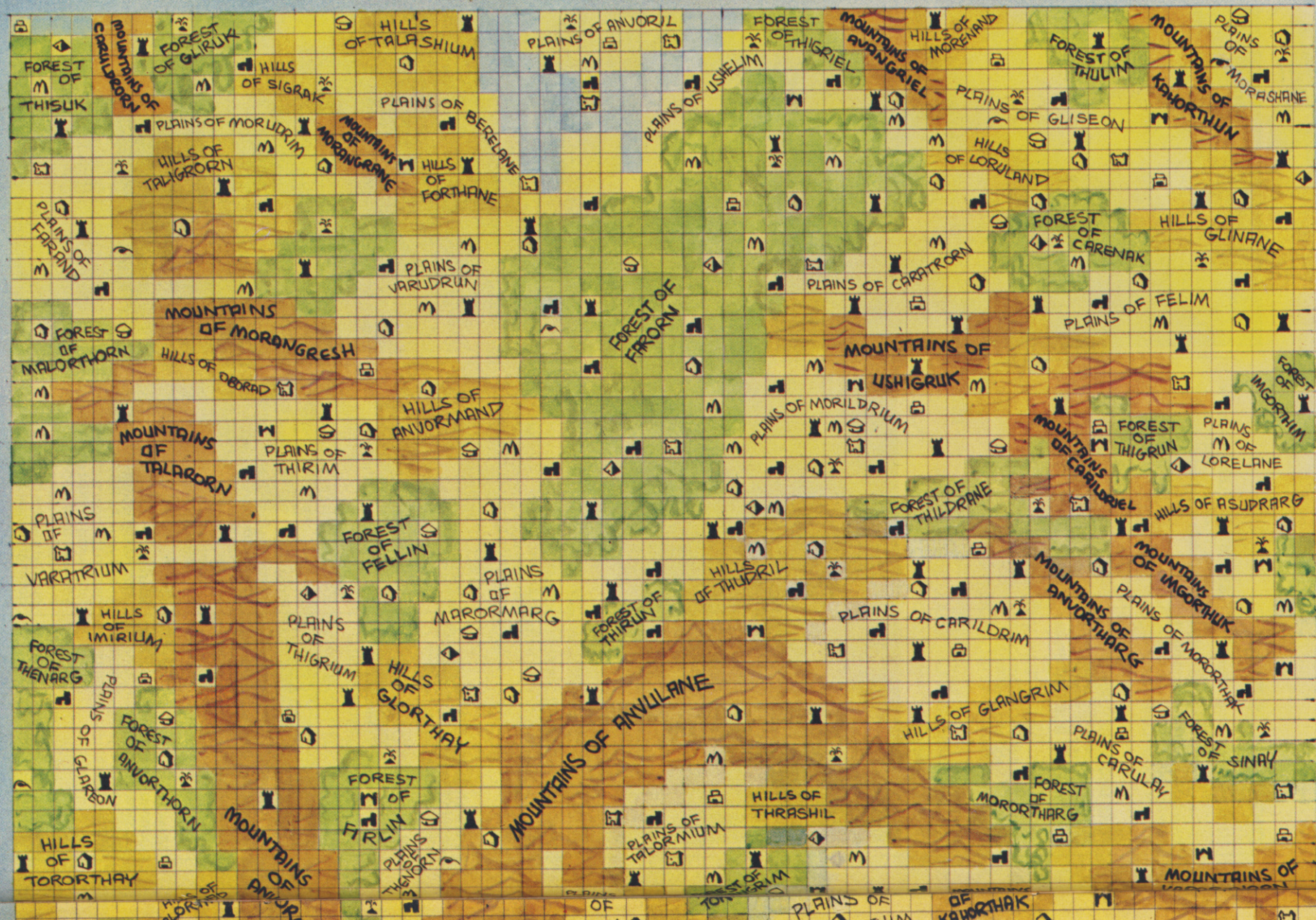
That's all for now. Next month I'll tell you how to complete the other three time zones and finish the game . . .



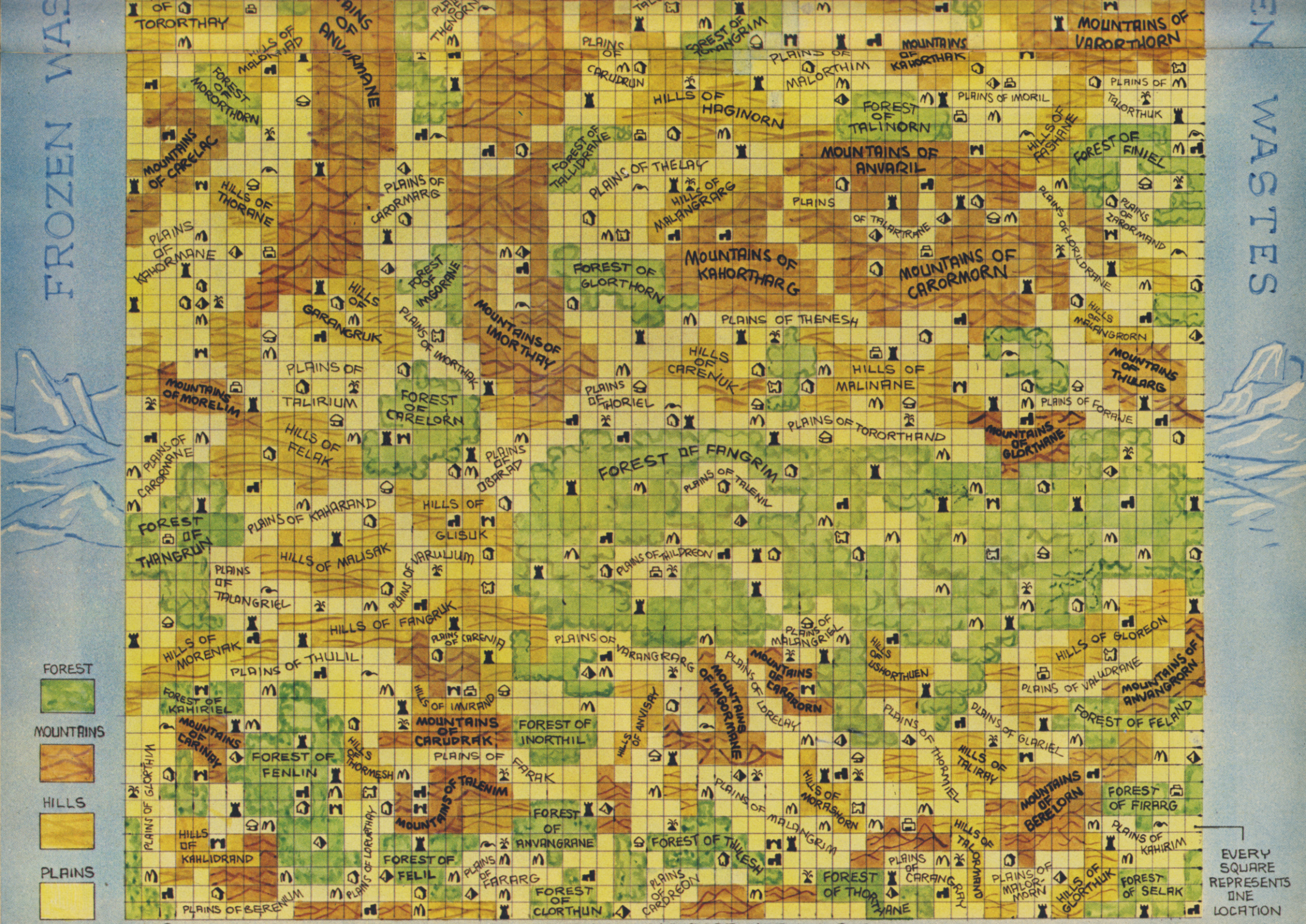
# DOOMDARK'S Revenge

MAP OF KEMARK




WASTES

FROZEN




GAME © BEYOND — MAP DRAWN BY O.FREY WITH HELP FROM BEYOND AND CRASH READER TONY EVANS OF KIRKHAM, LANCS.

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## GILLIGAN'S GOLD (Ocean)

**Tim** and **Ian Fraser** of Ruislip, Middlesex have been regular contributors to the tips section for many months now. Here's their latest batch of POKEs . . .

**Softaid Version:**
Rewind/fast forward the cassette to the correct point on the *Softaid* tape, type **LOAD (RETURN)** and press play on tape when prompted. Wait a second or two, until the READY prompt appears, then enter:

**POKE 1010,76 (RETURN)**
**POKE 1011,248 (RETURN)**
**POKE 1012,252 (RETURN)**
**RUN (RETURN)**

Now leave the game to load and when the computer resets, type in this POKE for infinite time . . .

**POKE 17993,0 (RETURN)**

**SYS 25532 (RETURN)** starts the game.

**Original Version:**
Rewind the cassette to the beginning and type **SYS 63276:SYS 62828 (RETURN)**. Press play on tape to load the first part of the game, and when the LOAD ERROR message appears, type **SYS 2096:LOAD "" (RETURN)** to load the second part. Loaded yet? Yes? OK? OK, press **SHIFT** and **CLR/HOME** together to clear the screen, and type in the following POKE . . .

**POKE 17993,0 (RETURN)**

**SYS 25532 (RETURN)** to start the game with infinite time.

## FINDERS KEEPERS (Mastertronic)

LOAD the game as normal, reset the computer and enter some POKEs to give you infinite energy . . .

**POKE 29787,76 (RETURN)**
**POKE 29788,96 (RETURN)**
**POKE 29789,116 (RETURN)**
Now **SYS 49152** to start

## HERO OF THE GOLDEN TALISMAN (Mastertronic)

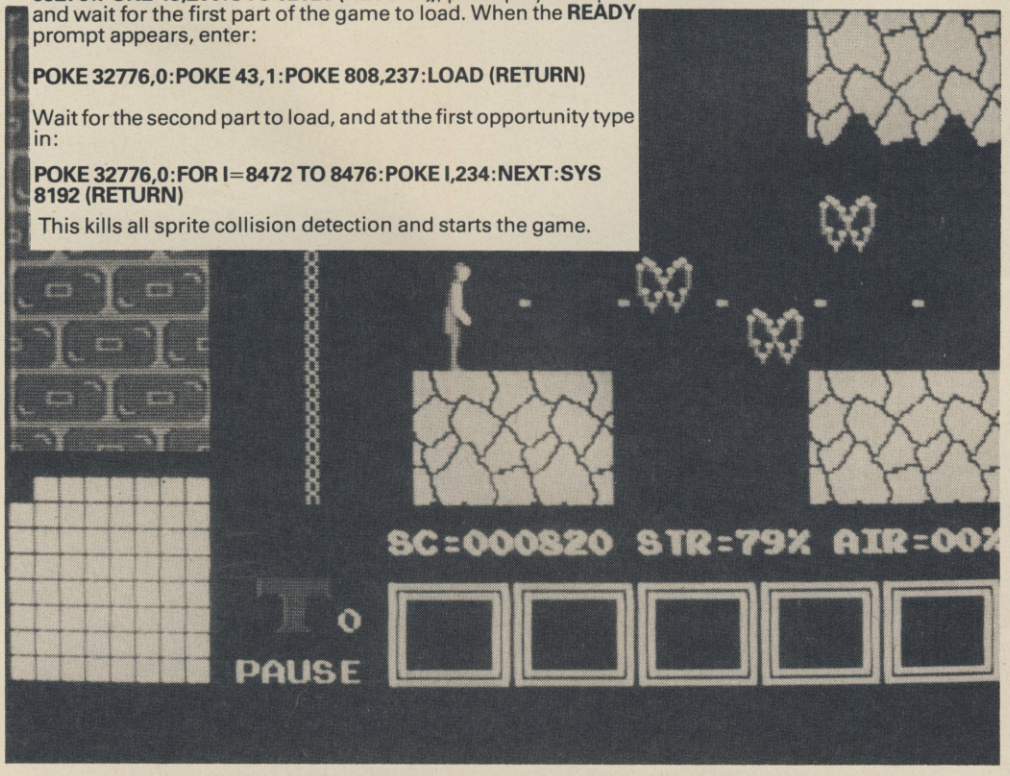
Some POKEs to kill all sprite collision detection. Type in **SYS 63276:POKE 43,200:SYS 62828 (RETURN)**, press play on tape and wait for the first part of the game to load. When the **READY** prompt appears, enter:

**POKE 32776,0:POKE 43,1:POKE 808,237:LOAD (RETURN)**

Wait for the second part to load, and at the first opportunity type in:

**POKE 32776,0:FOR I=8472 TO 8476:POKE I,234:NEXT:SYS 8192 (RETURN)**

This kills all sprite collision detection and starts the game.




## JET SET WILLY (Software Projects)

The POKEs featured in the last issue were incorrectly printed, and didn't actually work. Oh dear. Anyway, out of the kindness of Tim's heart, here is the correct listing. So, rewind your *JSW* tape and type in the following . . .

```
1 SYS 63276:PRINT CHR$(147)
10 POKE 783,1:POKE 830,34:
POKE 832,48:SYS 62828:POKE
53265,PEEK (53265) AND 239
11 FOR I=0 TO 30:READ X:POKE
1280+I,X:NEXT
12 POKE 8941,0:POKE 8942,5:
POKE 8945,76:POKE 8946,0:
POKE 8947,5
13 POKE 8950,76:POKE 8951,0:
POKE 8952,5:POKE 8953,76:
POKE 8954,0:POKE 8955,5
27 FOR K=679 TO 779:POKE K,
PEEK (8192+K)
28 A=A+1:IF A=99 THEN 30
29 NEXT
30 POKE 778,PEEK (8192+99):
POKE 779,PEEK (8192+100):
STOP
100 DATA 169, 27, 141, 17, 208,
169, 85, 141, 98, 242, 141, 124,
242
110 DATA 169, 169, 141, 146, 51,
169, 0, 141, 147, 51
120 DATA 169, 234, 141, 148, 51,
76, 160, 15
```

Check for errors and if it looks OK, type **RUN (RETURN)** and press play on tape. When *JSW* has loaded, the Wine Cellar bug will be fixed and any sprite/sprite collisions ignored.

## SNOKIE (US Gold)

This game's getting on a bit now, but here are some POKEs for it all the same. LOAD the game, reset the computer and get POKEing . . .

**POKE 32008,76 (RETURN)**
**POKE 32009,17 (RETURN)**
**POKE 32010,125 (RETURN)**
**POKE 31817,76 (RETURN)**
**POKE 31818,80 (RETURN)**
**POKE 31819,124 (RETURN)**

Once you've done that, **SYS 28994** to restart. Snokie the penguin is now virtually invincible!

## CHIMERA (Firebird)

Some novel POKEs from **Paul Gunning** of Eastbourne, East Sussex. LOAD *Chimera*, reset the computer and . . . Well, er, enter these POKEs . . .

**POKE 151,1:SYS 49152 (RETURN)** to hear the death scream.

**POKE 151,2:SYS 49152 (RETURN)** to hear 'CHIMERA!'

To adjust the speed of the speech . . .

**POKE 41226,32 (RETURN)** for the slowest speed

OR: **POKE 41226,192 (RETURN)** for the fastest speed

Try entering other values for different speeds.

To adjust the volume . . .

**POKE 253,0 (RETURN) for the loudest volume**

**OR: POKE 253,15 (RETURN)** for the quietest

Finally, you can create an echo effect by entering . . .

**FOR A=0 TO 15:POKE 253,T:POKE 151,1:SYS 49152:NEXT**

If you want to restart the game, type **SYS 2564 (RETURN)**.

## WANTED:

Can anyone write a screen designer for *Boulderdash* or *Rockford's Riot*? You can?! Great, send any details to the usual address for ZZAP! Tips, and if I print it I'll send you some software (and maybe a ZZAP! T-Shirt if you're interested).

LEVEL FIVE
AIR LOCK
DRAGON
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
POLYPS
PUFFERBIRD
ROTOFLY
DRAGON
LEVEL SIX
DRAGON
AIR LOCK
CRITTERS
TO KILL
TO BREACH BARRIER
MALLOC
ROTOFLY
TROLL
DRAGON
INVISIBLE BARRIER

# The EIDOLON

**THE LAST FOUR LEVELS!**
— LEVELS 1-4 — SEE ISSUE 12 ...

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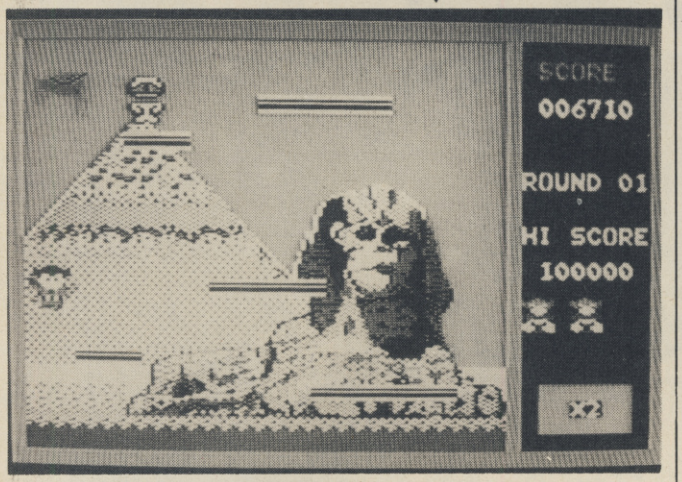
# ZZAP! TIPS




## BOMBJACK (Elite)

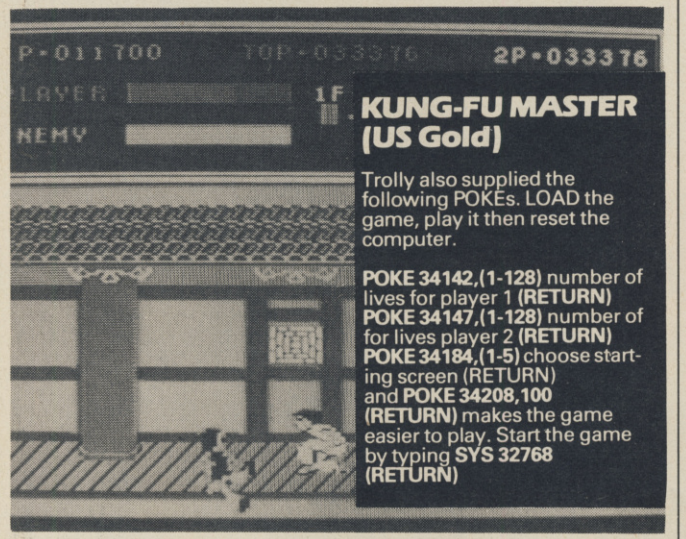
A quickie from **David Firth** of Fixby, Huddersfield . . . When on levels 1, 2 or 3, jump straight up to the top left hand platform at the beginning of the game and get the three bombs. If you do it quickly enough, you won't get killed by the space men.

## Z (Rino)

Some more POKEs for *Z*, this time courtesy of **Trolly (Game Hacker II)**. Guess what? Yep, LOAD the game, reset the computer and . . .

**POKE 2391,(1-255)** number of level **(RETURN)**

**Now SYS 2304 (RETURN)to restart.**




## KUNG-FU MASTER (US Gold)

Trolly also supplied the following POKEs. LOAD the game, play it then reset the computer.

**POKE 34142,(1-128)** number of lives for player 1 **(RETURN)**
**POKE 34147,(1-128)** number of for lives player 2 **(RETURN)**
**POKE 34184,(1-5)** choose starting screen (RETURN)
and **POKE 34208,100 (RETURN)** makes the game easier to play. Start the game by typing **SYS 32768 (RETURN)**

**Well, as the fat blue banana said to the chain-smoking Basset hound . . . Actually, I can't remember what he said. Oh well, I know for a fact he didn't say 'that's all I've got time for this month'. See you next issue, with even more tips, POKEs, cheats and, er, tips. Don't forget — keep them tips, POKEs, cheats and, er, tips coming in, 'cos it's your input that makes my output all that more interesting to read (is that possible? — Ed).**

**Send all bits 'n' bobs (no SAEs (unless they're to return a map or something), pleeease) to: ZZAP! TIPS, ZZAP! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. Please mark ZZAP! MAGAZINE clearly on the envelope, 'cos I don't wanna a repeat of last month's performance. Thank you. To quote Clive Bailey of Nexus: 'Bu-bye' . . .**

## . . . and Hardware Tips

# THE ERSATZ JUICE MACHINE

**As moneybags of this esteemed company, FRANCO 'FRUGAL' FREY is always on the look out for a bargain, VFM — Value For Money — and all that. So, when this little doobrie turned up in the office and he realised that it would save a bit of dosh, Franco decided to let everyone else in on the deal . . .**

Judging by the performance of our 64 review machines, the general life expectancy of the 64 power pack is counted in hours rather than in years. Not that anybody is accusing Commodore of sloppy design and workmanship, but the only way of extending the extremely short lifespan of the power pack is to spray the heatsink body with a freeze can every couple of minutes — hot stuff, ah! The trouble is caused by the potting compound in the heatsink body, which may prove excellent component protection against high G's, but prevents the 5 Volt regulator from keeping cool. The regulator has a thermal cut-out and is guaranteed to knock out the most hardiest software from the voltageless brains of the 64.

RAINBOW ELECTRONICS have come up with the right answer to this problem. Rather than spend the thirty odd quid for a new 'original seal' power pack, you can now purchase the *SRM* — that's not 'Stuff the Rotten Machine' — the **Supply Recovery Module**. You won't see any *SRM*'s in orbit despite the name. The power unit plugs into the socket of the *SRM*, and the *SRM* lead plugs into the normal power socket of the computer via the DIN connector. The *SRM* regenerates the voltage the power unit cannot reach — er, sorry, supply. And as there is adequate cooling, you can forget all about these trivial matters and get back to worrying about your mega-gargantuan high scores. At a price of £14.95 this has got to be the better deal. RAINBOW ELECTRONICS are so confident about their unit, that they offer a full years guarantee. The unit comes in a sturdy die-cast housing and has a full gloss black finish. The SRM's are available from RAINBOW ELECTRONICS at 26 Bradford Street, Shifnal, Shropshire through mail order for the snippet of £15.70, which includes 75p post and packing. The *SRM*'s perform impeccably, much to the consternation of our champions. Gone are the days of silly power pack excuses, the mighty scorelord has ruled!

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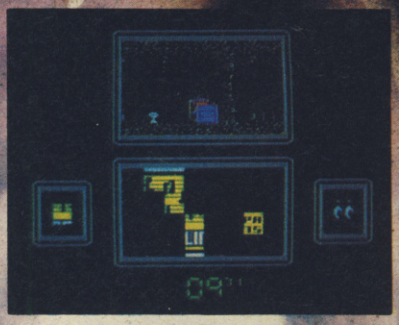

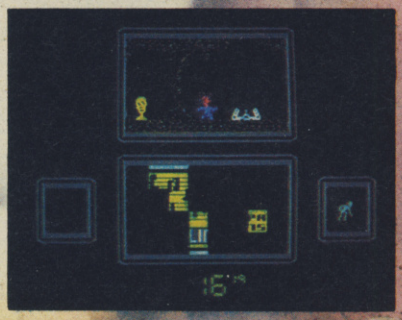

Deep in the secret underground lab beneath Kew Gardens Jeremy Windburn (punk photographer) searches for the inventions hidden by the Mad Professor. Can he find and photograph them before the radiation level has him glowing in the dark? Can you help him?

In case of difficulty Hocus Focus can be obtained from Quicksilva Mail Order, Greenwood House, Dewhurst Street, Darwen, Lancs BB3 2EN.

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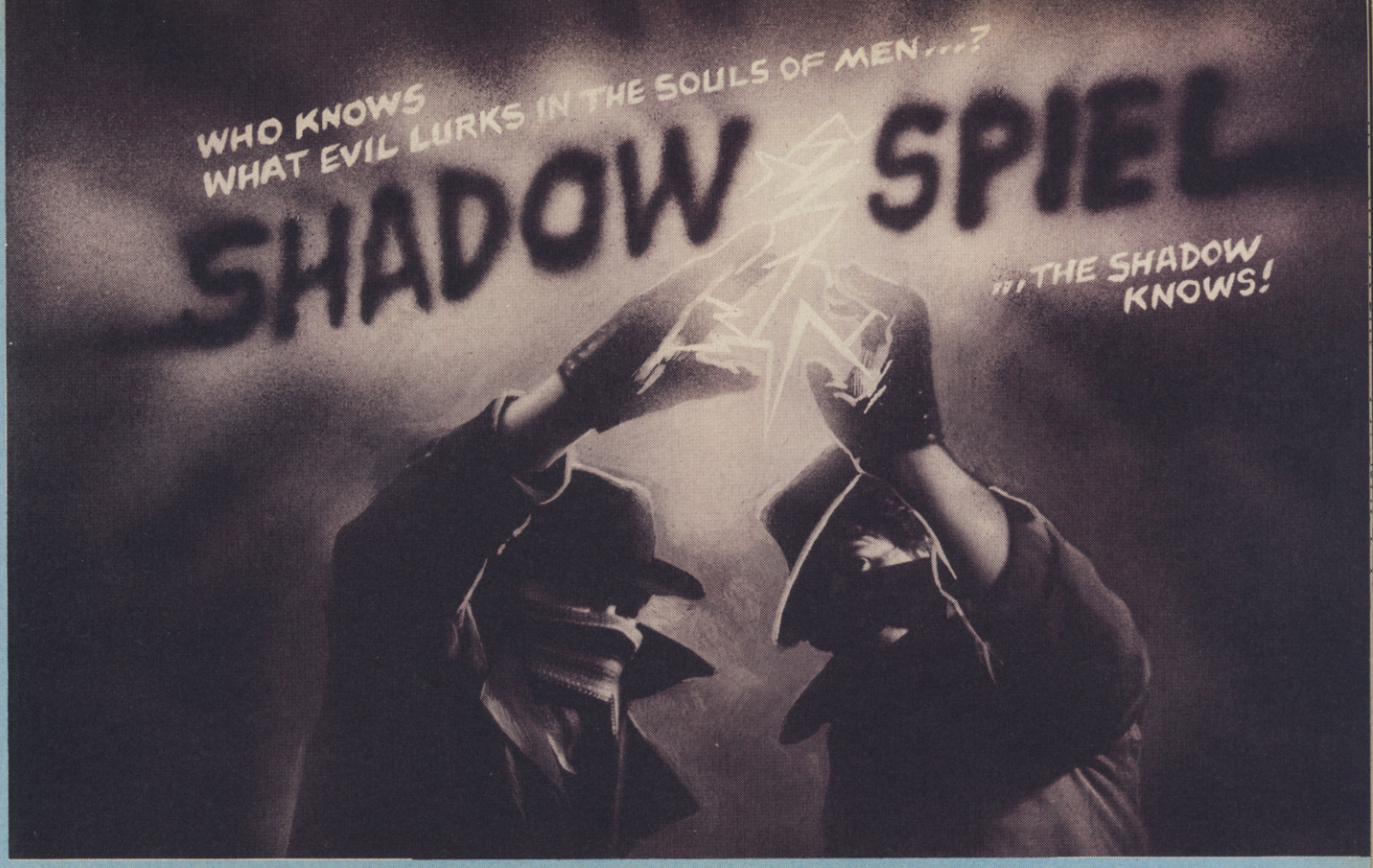


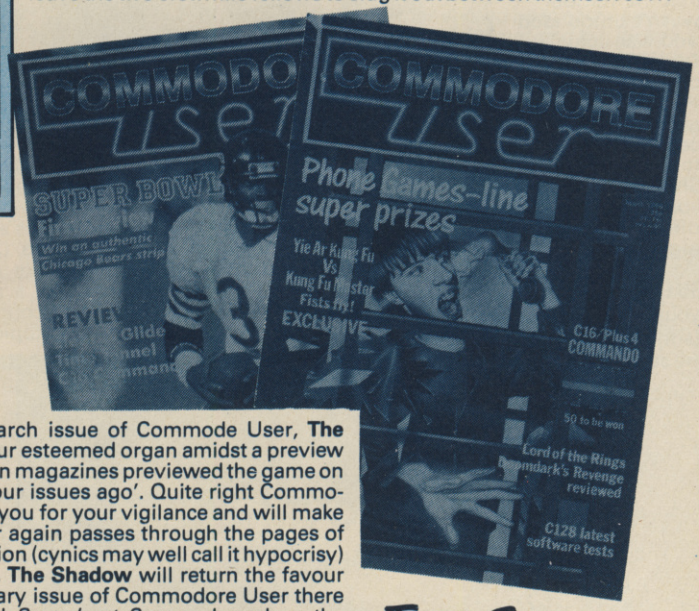

## FROM THE PENUMBRALPEN...

### TOY BOY DEAL...

R&R distribution seem to have quite a promotion deal on at the moment and our Mail order Queen, Carol Kinsey (AKA Auntie Aggie), is certainly taking full advantage of it. Apparently, for every order of software over £100 a free Toy Boy is thrown in. So, after eagerly ordering exactly £100 worth of goods from the Pontefract software sales people, Carol was given a sixteen year old David Thompson to have, hold and look after. The deal has since closed, however.

### IN DEFENCE OF THE INNOCENT--

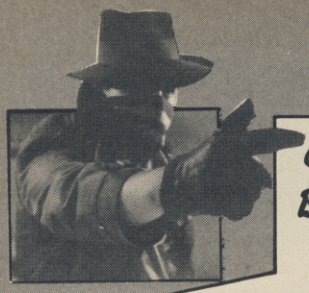
**The Shadow** — accept no imitations. It seems that recently some amount of bickering has been going on between the gossip columnists for Commodore (ab) User and Commodore Computing International. Francis 'keeps on walking' Jago (well, he has to after a lampost jumped out in front of his car and turned it into a Fireball X19) and Mike 'cow' Pattenden have been at odds for some mysterious and inexplicable reason. It is rumoured that at one point poor old Francis was indirectly threatened to have both of his legs broken. Gasp! Whether there is any truth in the rumour, **The Shadow** only knows, but suffice it to say that Mr Jago had the Felix, on his 'Felix Says' gossip page, redrawn with a leg plaster and crutches. **The Shadow** will maturely refrain from such debasing behaviour and leave the two erstwhile fellows to slug it out between themselves...




### THE INCOMMODIOUS COMMODE!!!

Whilst looking through the March issue of Commode User, **The Shadow** noticed a criticism of our esteemed organ amidst a preview of *Elektraglide*. To quote: 'certain magazines previewed the game on the basis of the Atari version four issues ago'. Quite right Commodore User, **The Shadow** thanks you for your vigilance and will make sure that such a faux pas never again passes through the pages of ZZAP! But such a valid observation (cynics may well call it hypocrisy) should not go unrewarded. So, **The Shadow** will return the favour and point out that in the February issue of Commodore User there were previews of *Fairlight* and *Swords et Sorcery* based on the Spectrum versions, and in the April issue there was a preview of *Paperboy* based on the arcade version. Hope the information is of some help, lads.

TUT TUT...
TSK TSK... ETC...



## COMPANIES SHOULD BE NICE TO PEOPLE.

After many months of Activision's employees appearing within these hallowed pages it seems only fair that **The Shadow** should pass on news of the departure of some of their staff. Martin 'why don't you ever spell my name right?' Bysh and John 'I'm ethnic, so I must be street cred' Davey will both have left by the time you read this. Sadly, this means that Andrew Wright, zoo keeper of these two waifs, no longer has anyone to hit in times of severe frustration. Activision feared that the poor fellow would sink to some form of self abasement in times of stress, so newcomer John Dean, whose previous job was hitting people at Atari, has been employed to beat Andrew senseless at any given chance. **The Shadow** thinks it's nice that such a large corporation as Activision can still treat its employees as individuals.

SHOULDN'T THEY?

Make Tea, Not War

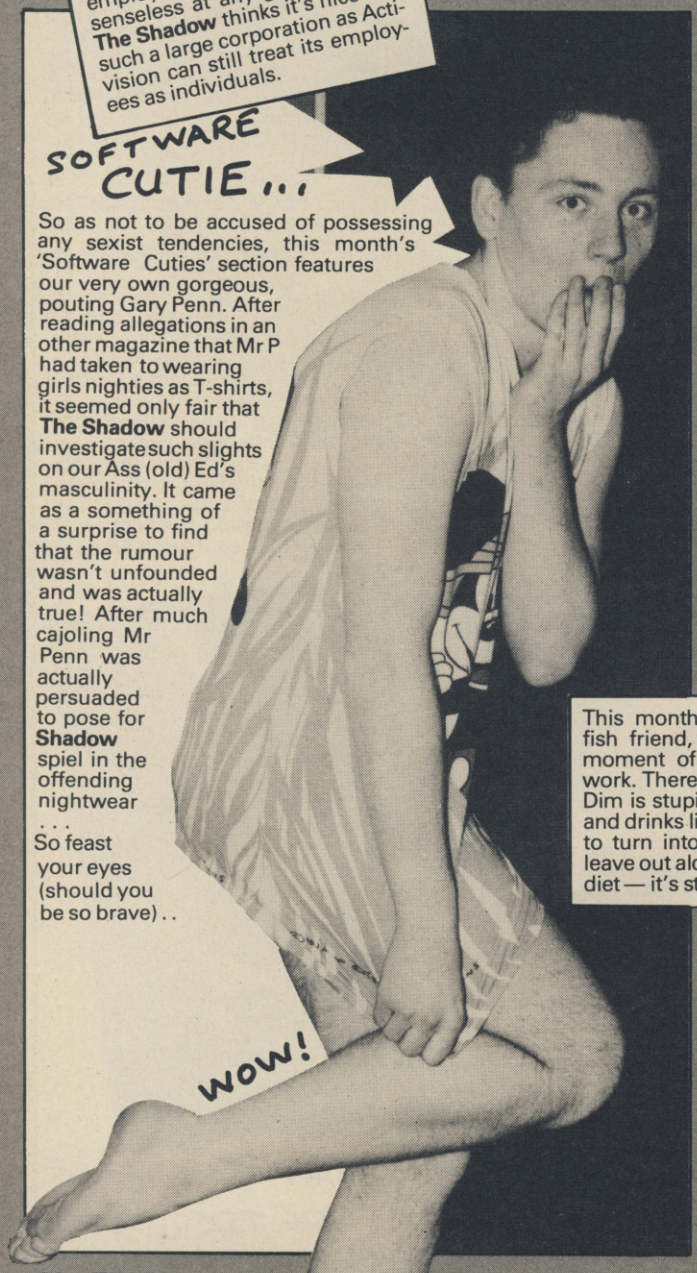
**The Shadow** hears that the minions of ZZAP! 64 are not going without. Gary Liddon's lissom surrogate spouse, Debbie Marriage, claims that they 'make it at least three times a day'. That's a lot of brewing, Gary!

'Yes,' he confirmed emphatically, 'there's nothing better than a nice cup of tea to start the day, break the day, end the day . . .' Any relation to Boy George, Gary?

## SOFTWARE CUTIE...

So as not to be accused of possessing any sexist tendencies, this month's 'Software Cuties' section features our very own gorgeous, pouting Gary Penn. After reading allegations in an other magazine that Mr P had taken to wearing girls nighties as T-shirts, it seemed only fair that **The Shadow** should investigate such slights on our Ass (old) Ed's masculinity. It came as a something of a surprise to find that the rumour wasn't unfounded and was actually true! After much cajoling Mr Penn was actually persuaded to pose for **Shadow** spiel in the offending nightwear . . .

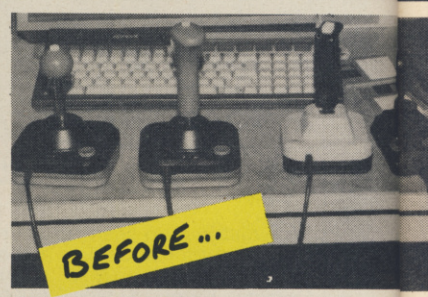
So feast your eyes (should you be so brave)..



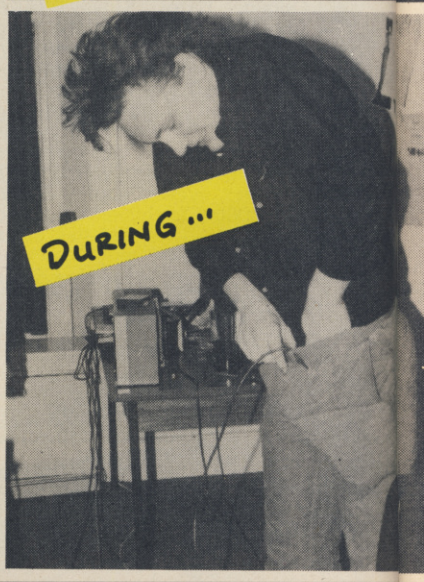
WOW!

## FISHY BUT TRUE...

This month **The Shadow**'s famous rubber fish friend, Dim Dim, is pictured during a moment of relaxation after a heady day's work. There is a moral to be learnt here: Dim Dim is stupid. Dim Dim smokes like a kipper and drinks like a fish. Moral: If you don't want to turn into a rubber fish of stupidity then leave out alcohol and nicotine from your daily diet — it's stupid.



BEFORE...



DURING...

## SOB, SOB, WE'RE EVER SO SORRY...

It is a well known fact of life that 13 is unlucky for some, and that we all make mistaks (there, see, what did I tell you). Well, in the last issue of ZZAP! we certainly had our fair share . . .

Firstly, we would like to apologise for the mixed up paragraphs in the Palace Software feature on pages 86 and 87 of issue 13. The mix up was due to someone 'spiking' Tony's yoghurt with a highly noxious substance (probably ink), and consequently he laid out the two blocks of text in the wrong order. Sorry Palace — Richard Joseph does NOT 'sound as a convenient growth of hair', honest!

Secondly, it must be said that the price quoted in the review for Activision's *Alter Ego* was

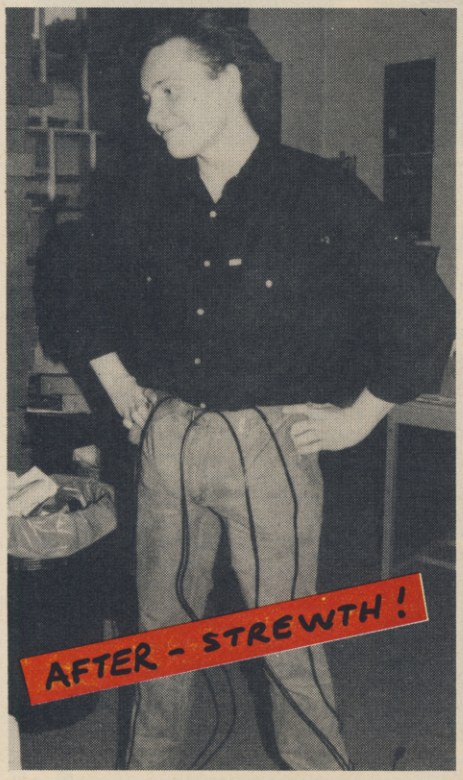
## NO CRASH BANG WALLOP . . . !!

**The departure of a certain member of the CRASH staff also saw the loss of a vital piece of office equipment — the Ghetto Blaster. Within only a few hours severe withdrawal symptoms set in — something had to be done! Julian 'Wild Sounds' Rignall hit upon the idea of trudging off to Currys and asking if he could borrow a Brixton Briefcase. Others sniggered at the idea, but the Currys personnel did indeed consent to loaning us the necessary equipment for a couple of days, until Mr Rignall bought his own.** The Shadow **would like to thank them for their tender help. Pictured here is Leslie, one of Currys' gorgeous, pouting sales persons, for your delectation.**

## A NEW RECORD . . . !

This month sees the introduction of Ego Corner, a section for those of you who wish to see your name emblazoned in lights upon a high score table, but don't have the necessary game playing ability to back up your dreams. This is a section that will let mediocrities shine. One such mediocrity is our very own Gary Penn, whose claim to shame is a high-score of four joysticks held within his trousers at the same time! Obviously such claims must be backed up with proof, so here is a picture for all those of a doubting nature. Any readers holding highscores of a similar type should send in their claim, along with photographic evidence (preferably black and white), to: **Ego Corner, ZZAP! 64, PO box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.**

Wossa Mediocrity?




## FOOLED IEM !

**The** *Mindsmear* April fool had quite an effect on the software industry in general. **Nexus, Beyond, Firebird, Macmillan, Mirrorsoft** and **Bug Byte** all expressed an interest in taking on the strain of marketing the Gigagame. How nice of them. Nexus were particularly intrigued and sent us a letter to pass on to the 'programmers', Phillip and Paul O'Connor. Firebird were also quite impressed and it's rumoured that a couple of their programmers are experimenting with some of the ideas put forward in the piece. As for the programmers extraordinaire, Paul and Phillip O'Connor . . . Well, they do actually exist, but all they own between them is an Acorn Electron and a copy of Aardvark's *Zalaga*. Surely it is true that from little Acorns great oaks grow.

## GASP . . .

Activision UK recently moved to new, more exotic premises in Hampstead, and with the move came a change of telephone number. All well and good you may think, but when a member of the ZZAP! team tried to call them they got through to an answer machine — and it wasn't Activision's! Shock, horror! It seems that if you accidentally dial their new phone number wrongly you get put through to Capital Radio Agony Aunt, Anna Raeburn's answer machine! Oh dear. Anna runs a phone-in chat show, dealing — rather bluntly — with, ah, people's personal problems. Is this strange quirk of modern technology a joke on BT's part, or a ruse to confuse those wishing to contact Activision? For once, **The Shadow** doesn't know . . .

**GOSH!!**

## SEX CHANGE SHOCK HORROR !

Scanning through the pages of a certain computing and video games magazine **The Shadow**'s eyes came to rest upon a report on a Golden Joystick Awards ceremony they recently held. Photographs of the attending celebrities were splashed across the pages, along with explanatory captions, and it was here that **The Shadow** was shocked to learn of Elite supremo Steve Wilcox's apparent change of sex.

*HE NOW LOOKS LIKE MARGARET AUSTIN - IT WAS IN C+VG, SO IT MUST BE TRUE --*

This month's **Shadow**spiel competition asks you, dear reader, to guess at **The Shadow**'s mysterious origins. Though **The Shadow** is sure that no one will even come remotely close to the truth, the most entertaining entry will grace this column. Entries should be in some sort of cartoon format and the lucky winner will receive his very own **Shadow** disguise kit, consisting of a Fedora hat, a scarf and a **Shadow** coat — be a superhero, scare small animals, amaze and astound your friends. Simply send your entries to: **Shadow Roots, ZZAP! 64, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.**

wrong. It should have been **£24.99** as opposed to £19.99. Sorry Activision . . .

Thirdly, there is no Minter Diary this month. This is due to Jeff's heavy workload, which means that he hasn't had time to write anything for us. Normal service will be resumed next month . . .

Finally, the *LCP* problem . . . It has come to our attention that the *LCP* listing printed in the tips section last month, doesn't work with some copies of the program. So, if you are intending to use the listing, don't — it may do strange things to your Pet Person. Those of you who have already experienced problems, don't despair (please)! At this very moment an *LCP* doctor is being flown in specially to deal with any problems — your *LCP* is NOT dead, just a little mixed up, that's all. Next issue the doctor offers constructive advice on what to do with your *LCP*, so hang on in there . . .

**THE SHADOW**
**% ZZAP! 64**
**P.O. BOX 10**
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# ZZAP! Flash

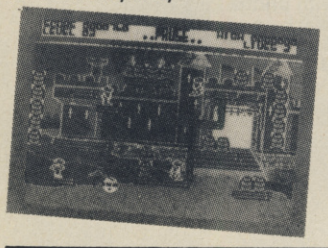
# N·E·W·S f·l·a·s·h . . .

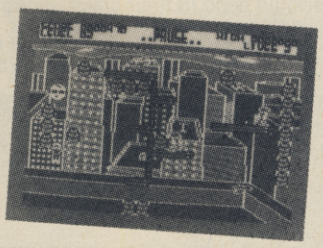
*Samantha Fox Strip Poker* hits the 64, and here's a screen shot to prove it . . . But then again, Martech could be bluffing.

## NU WAVE

*Tubular Bells* — you've heard the album, now try the computer program! CRL have launched a new label, **Nu Wave**, and their first release for the 64 is *Tubular Bells*, a light synthesiser with its own sound track — a full length rendition of Mike Oldfield's classic piece of music. *Tubular Bells* will be available from the beginning of May, price £7.95 on cassette.

A couple of screen shots from *Bombo* , Rino's latest game due for release early May.





## SLAMBALL

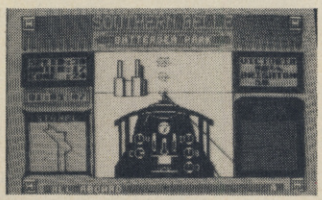
*Slamball* is a pinball game with a difference — the table is three screens long and it scrolls! The game is one of many titles soon to be released by US Gold under their budget label, **Americana**, at a price of £2.99 on cassette.

## NEXUS

*Nexus*, the game, is virtually complete and next month we have a full review. In the meantime, here's a screen shot of the nearly finished version to keep you going. Just thought that you might like to know . . .

## HEWSON'S

Hewson's next release is *Southern Belle*, a 3D steam train simulator that puts you in control of a 1930's King Arthur class locomotive on a run from London to Brighton. *Southern Belle* was designed by railway enthusiast, **Bob Hillyer**, and written by **Mike Male**, who previously wrote *Heathrow ATC* for Hewson. When they're not working on computer programs, Bob and Mike are Air Traffic Control Officers at West Drayton and Heathrow Airport respectively.



Meanwhile, **Andrew Braybrook** is currently beavering away on his next game, *Alley-Kat*. When he's not working on computer programs, Andy writes computer programs for Hewson. *AlleyKat* is due for release this Autumn, and is loosely described as a 2D space racing game. However, Andy hopes to incorporate many novel features not normally associated with racing games — for example, not only can two players compete against each other, they can work **together** for extra points and bonuses. More details next month.

## WINNERS

Would the winners of the *Little Computer People*, *Scalextric* and *Rock 'n' Wrestle* competitions (published in the Christmas Special) please contact ZZAP! as soon as possible, as we don't have your full names and addresses. The reason being that unfortunately we have had several power glitches recently, and one of them resulted in the loss of several files (you see, we store all of our reviews, competitions etc on a computer). Amongst the files lost were the full names and addresses of the lucky winners of the aforementioned competitions. We apologise for the inconvenience, and hope that this little quirk of fate hasn't annoyed you too much. Thank you.

# Evesham Micros

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"Freeze Frame" is simplicity itself to use. It is cartridge based so it is simply plugged into the cartridge port. When the computer is switched on a message is displyed, pressing "RETURN" will clear the computer back to the normal start up screen. Software can now be loaded from tape or disc **completely as normal**. The latest version of "Freeze Frame" will, to the best of our knowledge, allow **ANY software** to load and run normally (unlike competitive products).

"Freeze Frame" can be brought into operation at any convenient point by pressing the button on it. You can then do one of three things:

1. **Pressing "D" will save a working version of the program in memory to a formatted disc. This version will include a high speed reload.**
2. **Pressing "S" will do the same as "D" except that the reload will be at standard 1541 load speed. (Also suitable for U.S. spec. machines, 4040 drives, fast load cartridges, etc.)**
3. **Pressing "T" will save a working version of the program in memory to tape. This incorporates a high speed reload at approx. 2400 baud.**

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**"TRANS QD"** allows you to save a fast load system to your own discs.

**"DOUBLE BACKUP"** is a **very fast** two drive backup.

As well as these important newcomers all the old favourite utilities which have helped earn "Disector" such a large following are included. These include **Menu Maker (selective), Fast Format, Unscratch, Disc Monitor, Disc Orderly, Fast File Copy, Index, etc., etc.**

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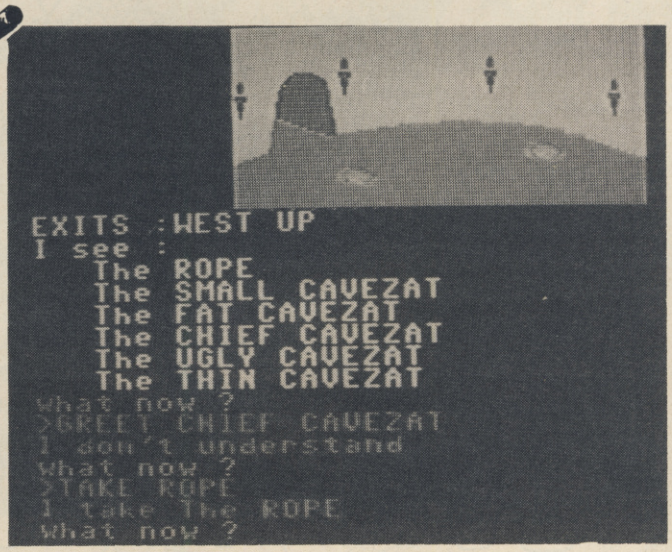
# ZZAP! adventure

**A complete monthly guide by the infamous White Wizard for all 64 owners who prefer games involving typed commands rather than wiggled joysticks.**

## KENTILLA

*Mastertronic, £1.99, cassette only*



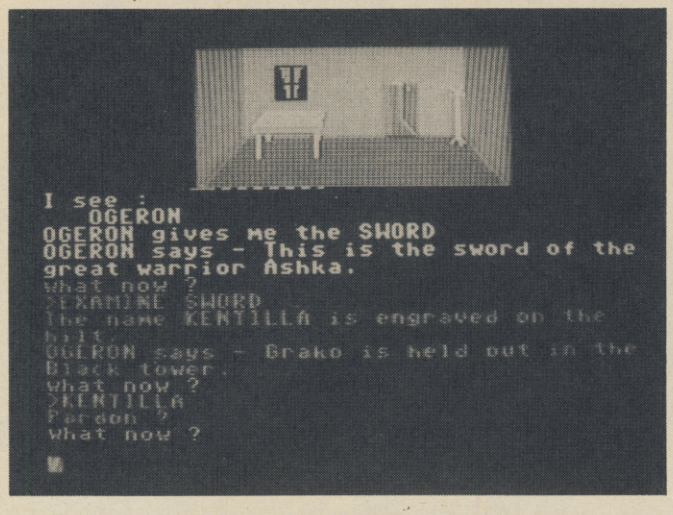

Well, well, who would have believed it! The Wiz first played this game on the Spectrum way back in the days of Personal Computer Games, *Twin Kingdom Valley*, and *Heroes of Karn*. I suppose it's just nostalgia that makes me look back on those days with such fondness. Of course there was a lot of tripe as well, but *Kentilla* definitely wasn't tripe, and now it's up and running on your 64 — and for only £1.99!

Frankly, at that price, I regard it as one of the proverbial 'essential purchases'. It's a quirky little game by Derek Brewster of *Code Name Mat II* renown (he also writes the adventure column for CRASH — Ed). The plot is quite straightforward — go forth into the world, the noble sword *Kentilla* by your side, and defeat the nasty Grako. The game, however, is about as straightforward as tape-worm tied in knots.

First, there are the most intriguing and incomprehensible characters. Whether you're doing battle with the Rattling Quarg, or exchanging meaningless banter with the Fat Cavezat, you're busy wondering what on earth these creatures do when you're in another location. Despite their strangeness, they appear to have very definite characteristics which lead you to ponder as to the nature of their private lives.

That probably sounds pretentious, but the essence of a good character in a game rests on it being able to convince you of its identity as someone in its own right. It's odd how some characters attract one and others don't — for example, I never had any time for Thorin in the Hobbit, for all his singing and ability to say 'No', whereas I conceived quite a liking for the giant in *Twin Kingdom Valley*, even though he didn't say anything.

It's the same with Kentilla. The different characters can move around, say 'Hello' and take or surrender objects, but they also seem to have a strange, indefinable 'personality'. After a while




you realise that the Nasty Urga-Maul really IS nasty, and that the Large Cavezat is precisely that — a Large Cavezat.

I expect I've lost you all by now, but basically the message is this: nip out with 1.99 in your pocket and get a copy of Kentilla.

Oh — and I almost forgot — the game features 12 minutes of pure, unadulterated Rob Hubbard sound-track. Mastertronic tell me that it was originally meant to be synchronised with the locations but they didn't have time do it. I don't care — it still sounds great and for once I didn't turn off the volume while I battled on with the game.

**Atmosphere** 83%
**Interaction** 78%
**Lasting Interest** 83%
**Value for Money** 98%
**Overall 90%**

# BORED OF THE RINGS

*CRL, £7.95, cassette only*

Well, it's certainly been a long time coming, this one. I think it was around 1382 when it first came out on the Spectrum. Just in case you hav en't heard of this neat little parody, perhaps I should mention that it's an illustrated Quilled game very loosely based on the Tolkien saga, Lord of the Rings. The game is split into three parts, and parts two and three require passwords to access them, so there's no cheating.

I reckon this game is showing its age a little now. There isn't exactly an enormous amount to do except laugh at the very clever take-offs of the Hobbit way of life. But once you've heard the Black Rider fart a few times, marvelled at the stupidity of Fordo the Boggit, and got over the shock of seeing such a milestone of fantasy literature mercilessly lampooned, the game begins to wear a bit thin.

Classics like this one pose a bit of a problem for the Wiz. They've been reviewed often before. Everybody says how brilliant they are. And that makes it difficult to work out how I would feel if this game suddenly fell onto my desk out of nowhere with no previous history. I think I'd probably have a very good laugh, point out that all three games together give you quite a lot of places to go, but not be wildly impressed with the actual gameplay. Here's a sample from the game:

**DRINK ALE**
*Fordo drank the ale, hiccupped twice, threw up all over the place, fell over and immediately felt much better.*

Yes, well there's plenty more where that came from. Those who fancy mucho silliness will find this game very much to their liking. I certainly found it extremely funny, but I'm not sure how much time I'll actually spend playing it once I've got over the humour. As a classic, this is definitely a purchase to consider, but if you haven't got 7.95 handy, don't weep too loudly.

**Atmosphere** 79%
**Interaction** 65%
**Lasting Interest** 75%
**Value for Money** 68%
**Overall 78%**

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# BALLYHOO

*Infocom, £25 plus VAT, disk only*

The White Wizard sat at his trusty 64 in stunned silence as the world fell about his ears. Surely not . . . No, it couldn't be . . . You don't mean .

Yes, I'm afraid so. An era has passed, ladies and gentlemen. The Bearded One has finally come across an Infocom game that doesn't make the 90% league. But hold it right there! It's still in the eighties, and it costs a bit less than the other full-price Infocom gems at only £25 (excluding VAT). Will this be the first Infocom game you miss out on? Here's the news, so judge for yourself.

*Ballyhoo* is written by a relative newcomer to Infocom — Jeff O' Neill, and it's his first Infocom offering. Perhaps we can therefore excuse him for not coming up with something of the standard we expect from, say, Steve Meretsky of *Sorcerer* fame. It's difficult to put ones finger on what exactly it is about *Ballyhoo* that doesn't quite engender the sparkle of earlier releases. The setting is ingenious — a circus big-top, complete with surrounding out-houses, menageries, caravans, and a host of First of Mays, Joeys, roustabouts, and even a keister or two. Just in case that's got you foxed, I should explain that there's a crash course in authentic circus slang included with the game (along with your ticket, a balloon and an ad for Dr Nostrum's Extract).

Hanging around after the show you just happen (you would, wouldn't you?) to hear the circus manager chewing the cud with a local private eye. The aforesaid cud is slightly muffled, but by hiding in the near vicinity of the gents in question you hear that Chelsea, the circus man's daughter, has gone missing. Fired with righteous indignation and an unhealthy desire to tickle the circus fat lady, you decide to look for the girl yourself.

There are some stunning locations. I don't recall when I last hung out inside a lions' cage, but I shan't be doing it again in a hurry. As to my visit (wearing a gorilla costume) to the gorilla cage — well, the less said the better.

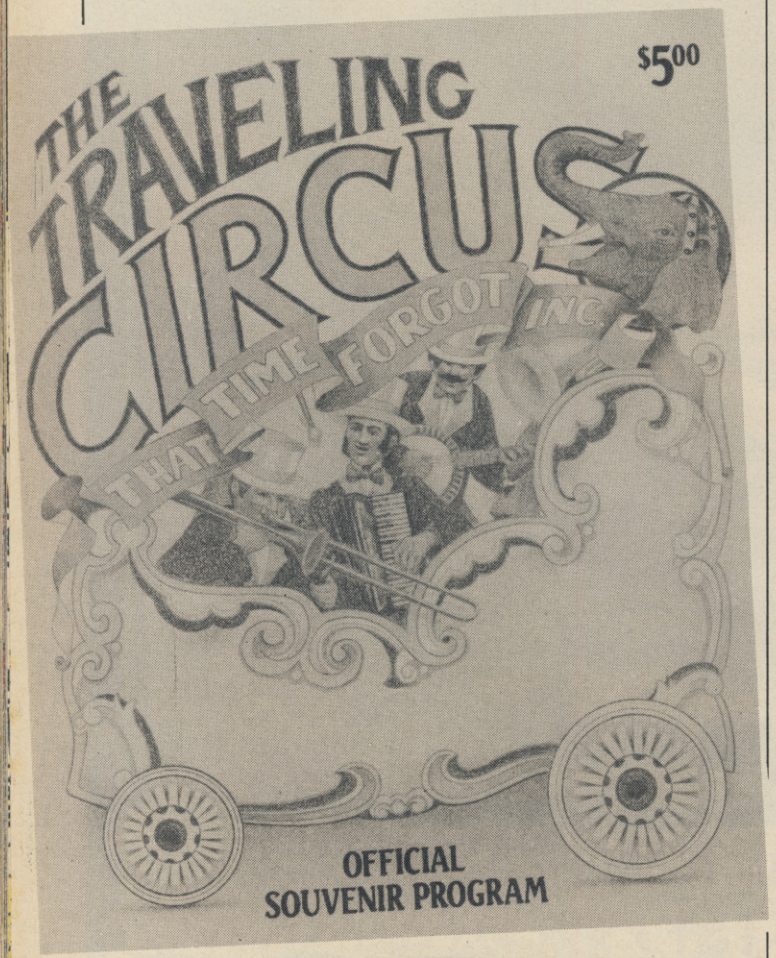
Puzzles range from the insignificant (dodging under the edge of tents to avoid paying admission) to the enormous (a fat lady so large she takes up two whole locations). The difficulty is pitched just about right (Infocom call it 'standard' level), but there were one or two places where I felt that the Infocom magic was slipping slightly. Would you believe a spelling mistake (eek!)? And a case where the word 'bars' was interpreted as 'passage'? In any other game these would be par for the course — and the course would be well run — but in an Infocom game they stick out of the screen like an elephant in a pink tu-tu.

Apart from the teensy-weeniest little errors like these, there was something else about the game that didn't quite bowl me over. I don't know exactly what it was (perhaps I'm just not a circus fan) but somehow it seemed to lack some of that dreamy quality that gives other Infocom games their special quality and gripping atmosphere.

When I went back to the game after a pause for reflection, I found myself still harbouring faint blasphemous doubts. There's no doubt, however, that there's a lot of fun to be had nonetheless. I climbed up to the trapeze artists' nest, had my palm read by Rimshaw and toted the circus dwarf round a bit. All jolly good fun, but I didn't get very near to solving the mystery and there's obviously a good deal of gameplay here to give you your money's worth. Still, the doubts remain (though further play has alleviated them — slightly).

No, really, I'm feeling quite embarrassed saying all this. By any normal standards the game is excellent — but is it truly excellent by the standards that Infocom have set themselves? Of that I'm not convinced, but I'd be very interested to hear what other *Ballyhoo*ers have to say. In the meantime, I think I'd probably shell out the readies for this one — but then for some of Infocom's other recent titles I'd shell out almost twice as much and still feel that I hadn't been ripped off.

**Atmosphere** 86%
**Interaction** 90%
**Lasting Interest** 91%
**Value for Money** 80%
**Overall 88%**




# THE PILGRIM

*CRL, £7.95, cassette only*

*The Pilgrim* is a Quilled game that the Wiz just caught in pre-release form before going to press. To be honest, it's a bit of a shock to see a Quilled game (without graphics) retailing at £7.95 these days. It's an even bigger shock after playing *Kentilla* for only £1.99, but that's the British software industry's pricing structure for you.

The plot of this little number is a bit like the curate's egg — good in parts, rotten in others. Your homeland has come under attack from the warlike Silvians who have blown everybody up and you, of course, as one of the few survivors, must wreak vengeance. So far, not so good. There must have been a dozen games with vaguely similar scenarios. However, the interesting bit is that somewhere, dozing away under a mountain, lurks The Guardian — an awesome being who will, in the darkest hour, provide help for the people of your country.

Other attractions include some imaginative use of nuclear weapons, very full location descriptions (for a Quilled game), and some imaginative text, all of which go towards making this a very enjoyable release (if a little overpriced).

Where the program fell down slightly, the Wiz felt, was in its over-use of the Quill's 'countdown' facility. A number of situations develop which are of the 'now you've got ten moves and then if you don't do something you'll die' variety. This happened three times in the early part of the game and was somewhat tedious. The only other annoyance is that one or two of the puzzles depend more on word-play than on logic. Confronted with a panel, for example, I felt sure that I should push it or move it somehow, but the program obstinately refused my inputs until I tried 'HIT WOOD'. Once I've worked out what to do, I like to be able to get on with it without too many vocabulary problems of this nature.

Better than a lot of text-only Quilled efforts, though the lengthy descriptions inevitably mean that there are fewer locations, and I'm not sure that 7.95 is the right price for this one.

**Atmosphere** 71%
**Interaction** 60%
**Lasting Interest** 62%
**Value for Money** 50%
**Overall 58%**

# WIZARD'S MAILBAG

The question of disk games raised its head a couple of months back, and this month **The Crimson Wizard** (whoever he is) writes: 'I've been trying my hand at disk-based adventures recently and have to say that one of them really takes the Balrog! I was happy to part with very few Zorkmids for a copy of Infocom's *Zork I*, which has really kept me playing! I believe that this is their first game, and yet it all seems so excellent that I can't imagine what their present games are like!'

At this point, Ol' Whitey began to laugh hysterically at the thought of his Crimson Companion tackling *Suspect*, *Sorcerer*, or *Spellbreaker*. Let's face it, Crimson ol' buddy, if your jaw dropped when you played *Zork I*, your teeth are going to end up in the cellar when you get down to a game like *Suspect*. I hate to tell you this, but *Zork I* (though an excellent game) is pretty primitive compared to some of the later games, and I'm afraid that the bad news is that you're either going to be a lot poorer soon or a very frustrated Wizard!

The Crimson One goes on to reminisce about some of the responses he received in *Zork*. The one I liked best was the reply to the input 'Look at me' — 'That's difficult', the program replies, 'unless your eyes are prehensile'. Nice one, Infocom, and as far as the ogre is concerned, my blushing colleague, check out this month's tips.

Meanwhile, the Wiz was settling down to a relaxing game of thirty-dimensional noughts-and-crosses when the following epistle slipped through the letter-box: 'Last month I was delighted', writes **Michael Taylor**, 'to see a preview of my game *Causes of Chaos*', especially in view of the fact that you seemed to like the game, and hence likely to give it a good review in the February issue. So you can imagine how surprised I was to read the review when it finally came out, especially bearing in mind the very marked change of attitude on your part.

'The reason I'm writing is because it seems to me — and please correct me if I'm wrong — that the review was written without playing very far into the game, and thus without appreciating its true depth . . . I love adventures and I'd hate to put out one myself that was sub-standard, which is why it really hurt me when you wrote 'the game is hardly enough to sustain the attention of one person, let alone six' . . . '

Michael goes on at some length about the review I wrote, dealing with the various points I made and agreeing with me on some and disagreeing on others. He ends up by writing, rather poignantly, 'if you still have the review copy please play the game a bit more and try to get deeper into it — after having spend nearly two years on a game, bearing one particular aspect (ie, it's quality — Wiz) of it in mind, it's a bit soul-destroying to have a review suggest that this aspect had been passed over!'

Oh dear. The Wiz has mixed feelings about this letter. Much as it may sometimes appear to the contrary, I hate being rude about a game — especially one that took two years to write! I'm afraid that there is always a problem with reviewing software — particularly adventure software — and that is the question of personal taste. For example, elsewhere in his letter Michael felt that *The Hobbit* 'though the programming was undoubtedly excellent, left much to be desired as a game, and was not as much fun to play as, for instance, any of the Scott Adams series.'

This gives us something of a clue to the sad situation of the *Causes of Chaos* review, because the Wiz would disagree violently with that statement. I like Scott Adams games, but I don't believe that all of them beat *The Hobbit* for playability. It is true, Michael, that I didn't finish *Causes of Chaos* — but I did get a fair way into it and my lack of progress was eventually born of a lack of interest in continuing rather than the impossibility of the puzzles or a shortage of time.

However, whenever someone writes in to make a point of this nature, I do feel honour bound to get a second opinion of the game. So don't despair, Michael — if my gnomes think I've been too harsh on your product, I'll print their comments in the next issue to redress the balance.

'Do you ever get time to read books?', asks **Andrew Leighton** of Accrington. 'If you do and you have not already read them, you could do worse than read the three Shanara books by Terry Brooks. A most revolutionary approach to elves and dwarves . . . ' The Wiz does indeed read books — about three or four a week on average. It has long been a source of annoyance to the family gnomes that I get though the average paperback in about three hours, so after approximately eight hundred years (I always lie about my age) you can imagine how many discarded volumes there are cluttering up the cloisters. Seriously, though, it's nice to see someone mentioning fantasy fiction — after all, most adventure software owes a large debt to the book trade. Thanks for the tip Terry, and if anyone else has some views to air on the printed page then drop me a line.

Finally, a letter from **Christian Martensen** of Denmark. Christian writes a helpline for a Danish magazine, and all I can say is that I have never seen a longer list of 'adventures completed'. His address has now been entered in Clever Contacts, and to save you counting the titles, I can tell you that the lad has romped through forty scenarios and lived to tell the tale. What is it about these Danes, do you think? Probably something to do with the fact that, no matter how perilous the situation, they always manage to save their bacon . . .

# WIZARD TIPS

Let's face it, if you want to live long enough to get a beard as long as you-know-who, you'll need a bit of help . . . Especially if a large ogre is heading straight for you with murder in his eye and a Balrog straining at the leash. Should that be your problem, I suggest you switch off the computer or, if it's already off, stop taking the pills. In the meantime, you might try some of the Whizzard Remedies printed below . . .

**EUREKA**

**Prehistoric Age**
Can't survive the molten river — some fungi might help.
Use your mouth to survive the snake bite.
Can't get the talisman, use something very hard.
(Thanks to Nick Wright of Mickleover)

**Roman Age**
Eat the clucker if your out of vigour.
Stuck in the leper colony — that's no yolk!

**Arthurian Age**
Green Knight no problem once you've got a horse.

**Colditz**
Dogs don't like pepper

**LORD OF THE RINGS**
Throw a treasure at the barrow-wight.
Don't enter the red tower.
A visit to the mayor is enough to get you into Michel Delving.
The Taciturn Elf may help with the river in Lothlorien.
Radagast lives in the blue mountains — W, W, S, SW, S, E, NE, SW, W from SB.
(Thanks to Kevin Murphy of Kirkcaldy and Bilbo Baggins of Tottenham)

**ZORK I**
The cyclops could do with food and drink.
Dig, dig, dig, dig.

**THE TRACER SANCTION**
Give the bartender a bit of stick!
Bet 625 sols and switch the ace!

# CLEVER CONTACTS

This is it! The meeting place for Whizzards, Warlocks, and Weirdoes from around the world! Timely help to distressed adventurers, clubs for the curious and the sociable, contacts for all . . . In fact, why isn't YOUR name here? If you've finished a game (or games) and want to see your name in print and your mail-box packed full of epistles from fellow adventurers, then write to **The White Wizard's Dungeon, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB**. All details on a postcard wherever possible, please.
If you're writing requesting help, then please be aware that I may not always be able to find room for your request on these pages. By far the best course of action is to get in touch with one of the adventurers listed below. The White Wizard may be in the running for the Presidency of the Enchanter's Guild, but he's only human and can't answer every letter he receives.

## Club Help Offered

**The Questline Adventure Club** now boasts over a thousand members under the guidance of **Tony Treadwell** in Oxford. Questline also appears on **Compunet** and **Micronet**, though the Wiz isn't sure of the MBX numbers — check with Tony at the address below if you're curious. For free membership plus a newsletter (50p per issue, I believe — even poor Tony has to eat, you know), send an **SAE to Questline, 17 Headley Way, Headington, Oxford. Tel: (0865) 68637**

**Adventureline**, run by **Roger Garrett** of Chelmsford, is a rather more disciplined affair, and Roger got hold of me on Prestel the other day with the following message: 'Adventureline is now strictly a members only club. Membership is £12 a year, and members receive a free monthly magazine, 'The Guiding Light, in which we run competitions, reviews, hints etc. There are 8 helplines manned by master adventurers and open 16 hours a day, 7 days a week.'

Sounds like quite an undertaking, Roger and I wish you well. Readers who are on-line can contact Roger on **Prestel 919998507**

If there are any other clubs out there in the big, bad world who would like to use this spot to publicize their activities, then please send full details to the Wiz. I should warn you, however, that I will not include details of any organisation that does not succeed in convincing me of their reliability. I have my readers' interests at heart, and like Greek food, crates of wine, and silk shirts — all of which should be sent to me c/o the Zzap! office.

## Help Offered

Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Catacombs, Eureka, Hulk, Spiderman, Munroe Manor, Hobbit, Forest of Doom, Pyramid of Doom, Quest for Merravid, Holy Grail, Twin Kingdom Valley, Dungeon Adventure, Castle of Terror, Golden Baton, Perseus and Andromeda, Witches Cauldron, Classic Adventure, Arrow of Death Part 1, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Aztec Tomb Part 1, Gremlins, Jewels of Babylon
**Simon Gaunt, Tel. 0302 726917 between 5pm and 9.30pm only.**

Valhalla, Waxworks, Golden Baton, Hulk, Spiderman, Snowball, Arrow of Death Parts 1 and 2, Hobbit, Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy, Terrormolinos, Hampstead, Eureka
**Nick Wright, 1 Eastleigh Drive, Mickleover, Derby, DE3 5HZ.**

Zork 1,2,3, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Starcross, Suspended, Planetfall, Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy
**Nigel Morse, 11 Green Leafe Avenue, Wheatley Hills, Doncaster, DN2 5RG Tel. Doncaster 61672 between 6pm and 8pm, weekdays only.**

Urban Upstart, The Helm, Subsunk, Circus, Ten Little Indians, Perseus and Andromeda, Arrow of Death Part 1, Hulk, Spiderman, Adventureland, Secret Mission, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Gremlins, Lords of Time, Colossal Adventure
**Gavin Berry, 25 Beauvale Road, Hucknall, Nottingham, NG15 6PF Tel (0602) 635117 between 2pm and 5pm only.**

Red Moon, Lords of Time, Adventure Quest, Fourth Protocol, Lords of Midnight, Hobbit, Twin Kingdom Valley, Gremlins, Hampstead, Tower of Despair, Empire of Karn, Spiderman
**Sanjay Keswani, 76 Girdwood Road, London, SW18 5QT Tel 01 788 7511 not later than 9.00pm.**

Hacker, Dragonsworld, Hampstead, Empire of Karn, Heroes of Karn
**Lynn Leech, Tel 0942 606900 after 6pm and Sundays.**

Heroes of Karn, Voodoo Castle, Ten Little Indians, The Lost City, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, The Hobbit
**Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, County Fermanagh, N Ireland.**

Gremlins, Fourth Protocol, Hobbit, Empire of Karn, Snowball, Lords of Time, Red Moon, Twin Kingdom Valley, Tower of Despair, Mindshadow, Tracer Sanction, Spiderman, Adventure Quest, Lords of Midnight
**Sanjay Keswani, 76 Girdwood Road, London, SW18 5QT. Tel: 01 788 7511 before 10.00pm.**

The Hobbit, The Hulk, Spiderman, The Time Machine, Return to Eden
**Clyde Meli, Villa Yvonne, 36 Ta'Xbiex Terrace, Ta'Xbiex, Malta**

The Hobbit, Tower of Despair, Eureka, Perseus and Andromeda, Colossal Cave, Wizard of Akyrz, Munroe Manor, Fourth Protocol Part I
**Geoff Wing, 171 Beadlemead, Netherfield, Milton Keynes, MK6 4HV Tel: 0908 661287**

Ultima III, Zork I, Fahrenheit 451, Hobbit, Twin Kingdom Valley, Urban Upstart
**John Macvie, 22 Loanhead Street, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, KA1 3AU. Tel: 0563 42816 between 6pm and 9pm only.**

Hampstead, Snowball, Terrormolinos, Gremlins, Never Ending Story, Heroes of Karn
**David, 179 Gilbert Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4PT Tel: 021 565 2492**

Hobbit, Erik the Viking, Fourth Protocol I & II, Hacker, Castle of Terror, Zork III, Ring of Power
**Steven Kelly, 4 South View, Whins Lane, Simonstone, Burnley, Lancs, BB12 7QU**

Eureka
**Andrew Froggatt, 195 White Swan Road, Mt Roskill, Auckland 4, New Zealand.**

Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Hobbit, Gremlins, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings
**Kevin Murphy, 13 Munro Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 1PX Tel: (0592) 201384 after 4pm Mon to Fri; all day Saturday, but not Sunday.**

Zork I,II,III, Planetfall, Witness, Deadline, Suspect, Enchanter, Sorceror, Infidel, Suspended, Starcross, Seastalker, Cutthroats, Hitchhikers, Spiderman, the Hulk, Voodoo Castle, Mission Impossible, Pirate Adventure, Pyramid of Doom, the Count, Adventureland, Strange Odysseys, Golden Voyage, Mystery Funhouse, Ghost Town, Robin of Sherwood, Gremlins, The Time Machine, Escape from Pulsar 7, Arrow of Death I & II, Golden Baton, Perseus and Andromeda, Hobbit, Hampstead, Terrormolinos, Amazon, Dragonworld, Perry Mason Mandarin Murder, Erik the Viking, Mindshadow, Tracer Sanction, Dallas Quest, Aztec Tomb Adventure I
**Christian Martensen, St Kongensgade 72, 1264 KOBENHAVN K, Denmark**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Respect your fellow adventurers. Never phone after 10.00pm (earlier if specifically mentioned above) and **ALWAYS** enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you want a reply by post.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## Contacting the White Wizard

You can contact the White Wizard by writing to him c/o ZZAP! 64. I love getting letters and will always publish them on these pages if I've got the space. Remember that there may be some delay between your sending the letter and seeing it in print — we work to very odd schedules in the publishing industry.

If you have one of these new fangled modem things, you can get me on **Prestel 919994854** or **BT Gold on 83:JNL251**. People who contact me on electronic mail have a better chance of getting a direct reply, but please remember that I am NOT a helpline service! That's what the Clever Contacts are there for, and they're very good at their job.

ON-LINE WIZARDS

Brief jottings from the world of the Modem-Owning Magicians . . .

**Chris Gunning (232618977)** has been much on the wires recently. Like many others he seems to be stumped in *Borrowed Time*. 'I can get past the bit where we have got the suitcase, but have tried everything to elude the robbers. Can anyone help?' he cries.

**John Macvie** now believes that I'm the White Wizard, but he wants to keep quiet about his MBX because he doesn't always have access to it. 'Tis the reward of disbelief, John — the curse of the Bearded One!

**Tam Carson (07:TQC001)** sent in a remote mail from Aussieland with a big hello to all who cavort on these pages. Ah! The bliss of BT Gold long-distance comms! Anyone else out there on a Dialcom network?

Please note that the White Wizard cannot answer individual enquiries from lost adventurers. If you're really stuck, then try asking one of the Clever Contacts for assistance.

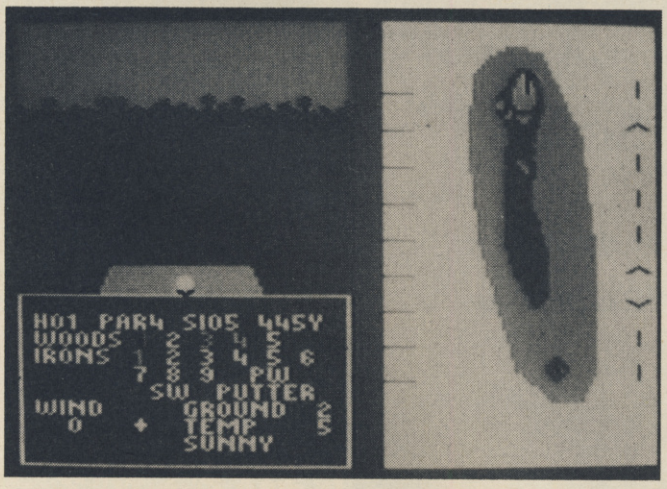
# UP AND COMING FOR THE C64 . . .

**The ZZAP! Preview Crew takes a look at some games that are just over the horizon**

## TEE WITH ARIOLASOFT GOLF CONSTRUCTION SET (Ariolasoft)

**John Minson dons plus fours and hops on the Ariolasoft courtesy coach . . .**

A wise man once said that golf is just a way of ruining a good walk, and I'll admit that I've never felt the least desire to whack a little white ball all over the countryside. But as our executive coach pulled up before the hallowed portals of Wentworth, where **Ariolasoft** were previewing *Golf Construction Set*, I began to soak up the atmosphere. And planned to soak up some alcohol at the nineteenth hole!

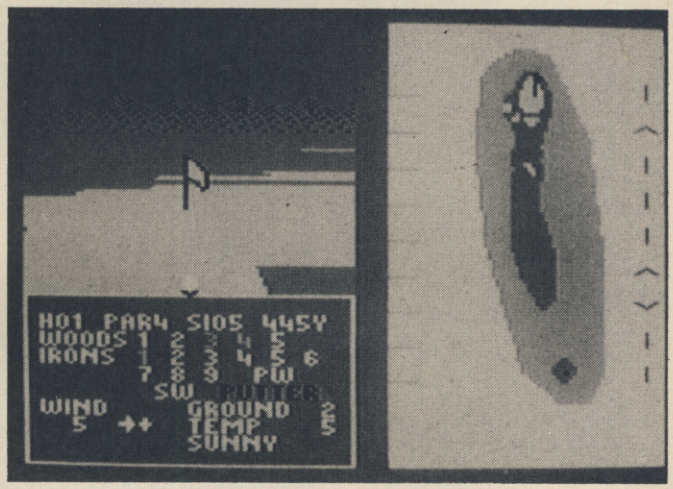



Having availed myself of the services of the bar, which was definitely not up to par as there were no Bloody Marys, I drove off in search of the game. And how many Commodores were there? Fore! It fitted to a tee. But enough of the golf puns — the game!

*Golf Construction Set* comes complete with four courses. You'll go bats over The Belfry, bask in Sunningdale and hunger for Royal St Georges, Sandwich — but not surpisingly it was Wentworth that was up and running. First impressions were good. Golf simulations aren't known for exciting graphics but this one includes attractive plans of the holes and a 3D view as you swipe the ball.

It also avoids that other curse of the golf game — the feeling that it's just guess-the-angle! Playing a stroke is something like this. First select a club from the ones you have with you — you're not allowed to rupture your caddy by taking everything bar the clubhouse sink. Next, aim the shot and until you're on the green this is done on the general plan with distance from the ball to the target cursor making no difference to shot strength. Remember to allow for the effects of the wind at this stage. Then a little icon lets you adjust the stance of your golfer's feet.

Unless you want to change anything, it's time to play that stroke. The first press on fire sets the animated golfer swinging his club; the second arrests the swing, determining stroke str ength, and then you sit back and smile as the ball sails towards the green — or snarl as it vanishes into a bunker. When you're in a position to putt it's slightly different with an overview of the green, and here the ball-to-cursor distance does affect shot strength. Ariolasoft claim that all this accurately mirrors the decisions faced by a golfer. Certainly, it soon becomes second nature and avoids looking too mechanical.

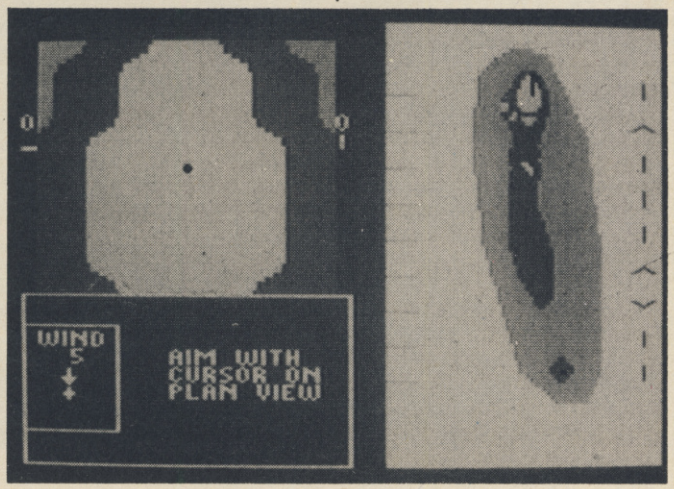



There are a host of factors to consider, from the obvious ones like the wind to the hardness of the ground, which affects how far the ball will bounce or roll, and even air temperature because apparently a stroke will travel further in warm air — though I reckon I'd hit it harder if it was freezing, to get back to the clubhouse faster! You'll also have to allow for the ground's slope

When you start, your Handicap is a dodgy 28, which means that not all the shots will go quite as you intend because common golfing faults are built in, but eventually your game improves. If you master the first four courses available, Ariolasoft plan to release add-on courses, based on major clubs — or you can play God and create your own layouts. Depending how silly you're feeling, you could have hours of fun creating almost impossible holes. Although designing a course is a time consuming process, the system seems fairly simple, allowing you to place up to 80 components in the landscape.

Even a sceptic like myself was won over by the effortless nature of the system — and to keep you playing there's the added incentive of £500 worth of golfing equipment for the winner of a play-off between the first dozen people to get their handicaps down to scratch on one of the standard courses. The first edition of the game comes with a Strokesavers guide to the Wentworth course. *Golf Construction Set* costs £14.95 on disk and £12.95 for the twin cassette version — see you out on the links!

**John Minson**

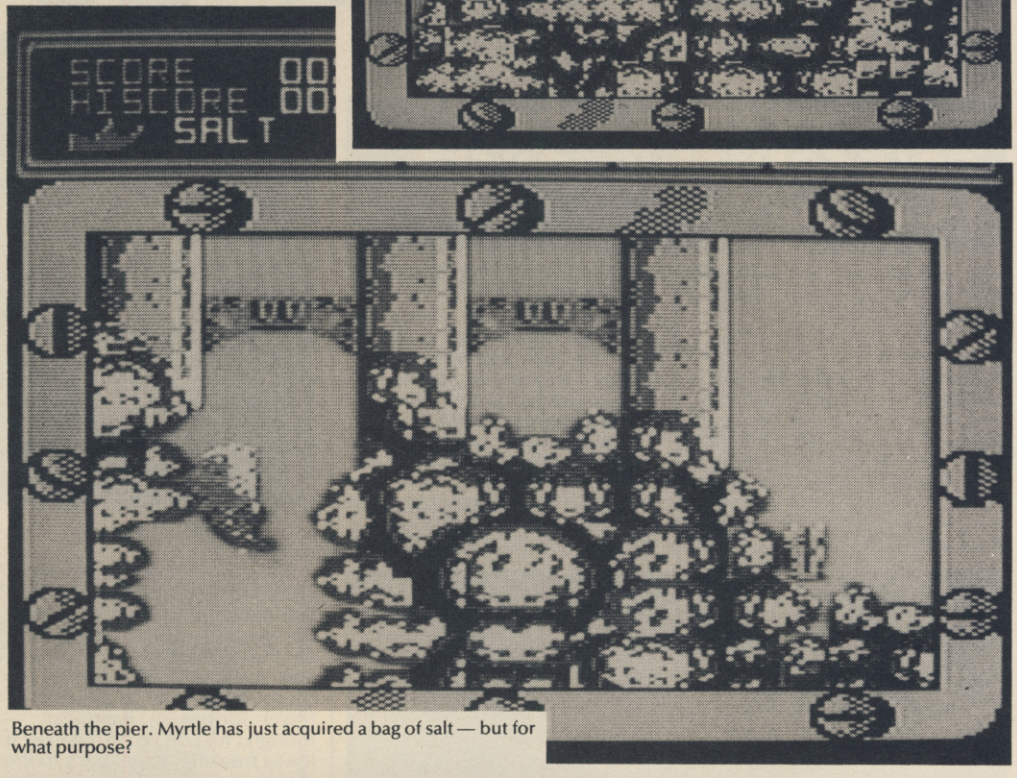


# PREVIEW

## MERMAID (Electric Dreams)

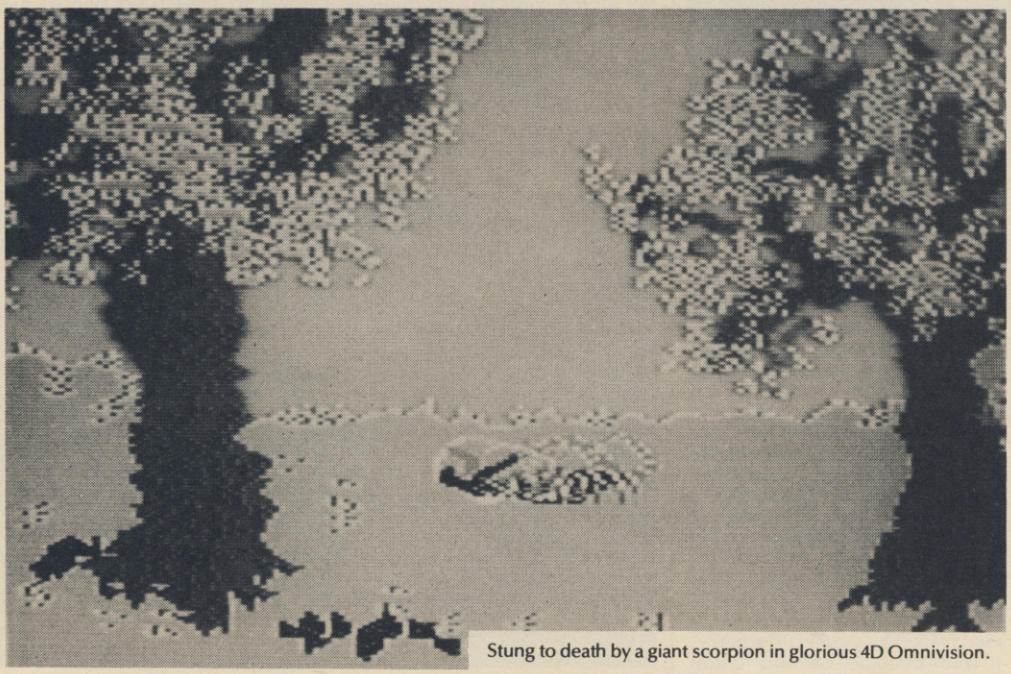
Myrtle Mermaid has been after a man for the past 112 years, but having a face that warps steel doesn't really help much. One fine sunny day in the middle of August she espies Gormless Gordon the deep sea diver who is about to brave the depths, and she immediately falls in love with him. Unfortunately, for Myrtle, Gordon catches sight of her first — he may be fed up but he's not hard up — and so he legs it, blubbery mermaid hot on his heels. But, in his panic, he gets trapped in a sunken wreck with only a limited supply of oxygen to keep him alive. Oh dear. Thankfully, Myrtle is on hand to rescue the poor fellow and this is done by using the various objects scattered about beneath the sea. Yes, *Mermaid* is an arcade adventure — a flip screen one at that — and very amusing and pretty it is too. But have you ever heard, or seen for that matter, an arcade adventure in which the hero has to drink stout to keep up her energy? I doubt it. These black and white screen shots don't really do the graphics justice, but at least you get a rough idea of what the game looks like. Oh yes, the accompanying soundtrack is also rather neat — it continually changes to suit the surroundings and it works really well. But enough of this subjective banter — *Mermaid* costs £9.99 on cassette and £14.99 on disk, and is reviewed in the next issue of ZZAP!

Myrtle, the very fat Mermaid with the bouncy chest, has mysteriously sprouted legs and wobbled up onto the rocks.




Beneath the pier. Myrtle has just acquired a bag of salt — but for what purpose?

## BEYOND FORBIDDEN FOREST (US Gold)



Stung to death by a giant scorpion in glorious 4D Omnivision.

It is almost two years since **Paul Norman's** *Forbidden Forest* was first released in the UK by US Gold. The game was rather a bloodthirsty affair in which you played the part of an archer who had to survive in the Forbidden Forest until dawn. This was not easy since you were only armed with a bow and a limited supply of arrows and the forest was full of very nasty creatures all out for your blood — and they usually got it.

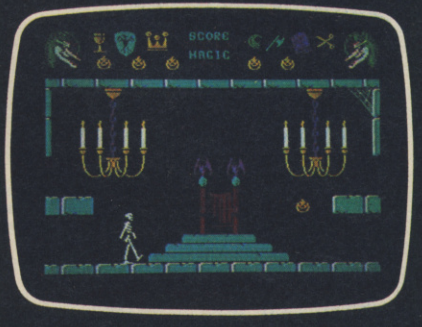
*Beyond Forbidden Forest* retains the chunky graphics of the original, along with the same addictive and atmospheric gameplay. So what's new? Well, there are five new creatures inhabiting the forest — giant scorpions and equally huge bloodsucking flies to name but two — and the game itself is played in 4D Omnivision. 4D Omnivision? Yes, 4D Omnivision . . . The landscape scrolls at three different speeds, creating a 3D parallax effect as before, but — and this is a very important 'but' — you can actually move and fire in and out of the screen! And very effective this is too, even though the graphics are quite coarse.

Full critical appraisal from the ZZAP! crew next issue.

If you go down to the woods today...
you're sure of a swift demise...

# CAULDRON · II

## THE PUMPKIN STRIKES BACK



Actual screen shots from the Commodore

Available from all good computer game stockists or by mail order from Palace Software, 275 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NL

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PALACE software

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For example, on most mail systems you are only given the standard headings such as name, street, town, county, etc. but with our system, you could for example find all companies listed that have a turnover in excess of a certain figure, or all subscribers who are behind with their subscriptions, or all people eligible for a Christmas card this year! A full range of utilities is callable from the menu including, ofcourse, label printing.

### Database

Superior file management system with features found only with packages costing much, much more. Completely user-definable data entry format - colours definable - advanced mathematics using built-in machine code expression evaluator - fast sort on numeric and string fields - extensive searching with 'wild card' capability - user-definable data summaries - simple on-screen editing. A really POWERFUL database!

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The Gemini cash book package for the Commodore 64/128 microcomputer is designed for a hardware system consisting of:

1. Commodore 64/128 microcomputer.
2. 80 column printer.
3. Cassette or disk data storage.

Please note that running the program on disk will not change the way that the program works, but you will have the benefit of far greater speed and reliability for the loading and saving of files that a disk system provides.
There is a total of 199 nominal accounts, a large number of which may be defined by the user. You may have up to four cash control accounts, six bank control accounts, one sales ledger and one purchase ledger control account.
The program will store a data file consisting of:

1. The account titles.
2. The current cumulative balance on each account (debit or credit).
3. The net movement on each account for every month of the year.
4. VAT net sales and net payments figures, which are automatically created and maintained by the program.

This same data file is used by the FINAL ACCOUNTS program. The 'VAT FILE' which accompanies this package is designed primarily for those users on the Retailers special VAT schemes.
The main features of the CASH BOOK program are as follows:

1. Double entry routines for transactions through the cash/bank accounts and sales/purchase ledger control accounts.
2. Journal facility for the initial set up of accounts, or for adjustments to any of the accounts.
3. The facility to produce the following screened or printed reports:

(a) Listing of all the nominal account titles.
(b) Monthly transaction summaries.
(c) A trial balance whenever required.
(d) Screen VAT memo account balances (sales/net purchases, and VAT accounts).
(e) A batch printing facility which provides details of all the transactions entered in the current run of the program.

4. The facility to extract regular management information such as cash/bank balances, debtors and creditors, sales, overheads, etc.
5. The program interfaces with the Gemini FINAL - ACCOUNTS program to enable Trading and Profit and Loss accounts and Balance Sheet to be produced whenever required. Comparative or budget figures can be shown alongside the actual figures using this program.
6. Screen prompts throughout the program to facilitate ease of use.
7. Storage of VAT information to assist in the preparation of periodic VAT returns.
8. Error trapping routines to minimise input errors.
9. The facility to handle the financial transactions of sole traders, partnerships, limited companies, clubs, etc.

Users registered for VAT are reminded that it is a statutory requirement to inform their local VAT office when they change their accounting records on to a new computerised accounting system.

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# Gary's TECHNICAL bit in the middle

**Okay, okay, so no one could think of a better heading for it, we tried 'Hardware Lidd-ons', 'Liddon's Link Up', even 'ZZAP!TECH' (ouch), but there it is. What's it all about? Read on (oh, by the way, it's by ZZAP! TEA 'N TECHNOSPERT GARY LIDDON, as if you hadn't realised).**

Although ZZAP! 64 is really a games magazine, there have been letters from readers asking for technical advice about the 64 in the past, and others asking for details on various utilities and hardware, so as I am merely an humble techno-pawn in the great game of ZZAP! Towers chess, I thought I would start an irregular column on the subject (that's because I am an irregular person). Here goes . . .

## STOPPING TIME

*Freeze Frame* is likely to be a name you've heard, probably accompanied by some sort of controversy. For those of to whom the words *Freeze Frame* have no meaning at all I will explain:

This handy little widget allows almost any one-load game to be backed up on either disk or cassette at the mere push of a button. The way it works is really rather clever. Contained within a cartridge that, quite logically, sits within the cartridge port, *Freeze Frame* boasts a little red button that is connected to the machine's RESET line. Once this is pressed it sends a pulse into the machine that it can't ignore. When a RESET happens the program currently being processed is interrupted and a special reset routine is run instead. Without *Freeze Frame* in you would just be returned to the familiar Commodore 64 **38911 bytes free** message but *Freeze Frame* replaces the routines that happen when RESET occurs. Instead of turning the screen blue and printing a silly start up message, *Freeze Frame* dumps the whole of Mr 64's memory onto disk or tape. It also dumps a little loader program as well that reloads all the memory dumped back into the computer and sets it up exactly as it was when the button was pressed. Boot up the loader program and after a bit of a wait your Commodore is in exactly the same state as it was when

you originally plonked your sweaty finger on the red button, whether you've got the cartridge in or not.

For those of you a bit less than technical, this means that a full back up of any one-load game is but a mere red button push away.

Using *FF* is a sinch, power up your 64 with the cartridge in and an instruction screen

Well blimey O'Reiley! Reset the computer like this and KIMOTA! — carbon all over the shop. However . . .

. . . with Evesham's Quickdisc installed you can reset until the cows come home. Never again will you have to dig shards of plastic out of your eye because you miswielded your paperclip. THIS is the safe way of entering Mr Penn's POKEs unless, of course, they're POKEs for *Little Computer People* (tee hee).

comes into view detailing the easy steps of backing up a program. Press return and the blue on blue power returns, from here just load up the software to be transfrered in the normal way. When at suitable point in the game, ie the title screen, bash the button and the screen goes into 'eppy' mode. Do not adjust your set as this is perfectly normal.

There are two things that you could do here: ) Press D and have everything dumped to disk, or **2)** Press T and have it all stream off to the datacassette. The handy thing about *Freeze Frame* is that when everything is reloaded it whizzes into the Commodore at turbo speed so even though all the machine's memory has been dumped it doesn't take that long to get back in.

However, when using a disk drive it's not as easy as the inlay suggests. Quite a few of the fast loading systems used on commercial software are a bit tetchy about timing. Quite understandable considering how fast the data is being forced down the cassette wire. The sort of thing that has them failing to load all over the place is leaving the disk drive on as it can sometimes slow down the 64 a little bit. I found that the best thing to do when transferring a game to disk was to leave the drive turned off until you actually pressed the button. Some games even protest at having the disk drive turned on when they are running, so taking power away from the drive in the game's title screen is sometimes necessary.

I tested *Freeze Frame* with quite a few games and failed to find one that wouldn't work. There were some rumours that *Bounder* from Gremlin Graphics is immune but the office copy was nowhere to be found. In theory there are ways to protect against *FF* but it would involve a lot of meddling around with the CIA's unreadable TOD alarm clock registers.

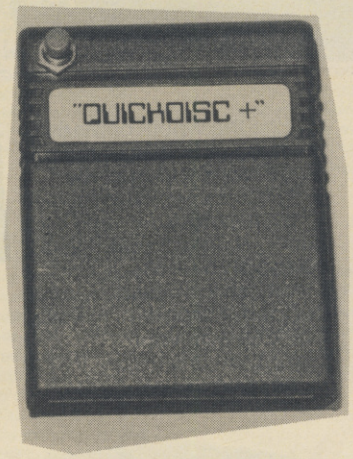
## FREEZE FRAME ⇐ THE MORAL BIT

As you can probably recognise, the potential for a pirate with a *Freeze Frame* cartridge is quite frightening. The product is intended to be used as a back up device, and a very useful function it provides too for the game buying public. There's not a lot I can say really apart from the fact that piracy is wrong and that we hope that any of our readers owning such a device would be sensible enough not to misuse it. However *Freeze Frame* is an excellent product, perfect for anyone who has a large library of software and has just acquired a disk drive.

## TURBO DRIVING

Another product kindly lent to us by Evesham was their *Quickdisc* cartridge which they claim speeds up the operation of the incredibly sluggish 1541 disk drive. Not only that but a comprehensive range of disk related utilities to make life just that little bit easier. The extra commands are provided in the form of the Dos 5.1 extensions on the test/demo diskette free with every 1541. Using the **at** ( ) sign as a prefix, all the usual scratch, format and rename commands are easily accessed without all the hassle of OPENing and CLOSEing files. Getting a directory onto screen is very easy with *Quickdisc* onboard as simply typing the dollar (¼) sign and pressing RETURN draws it up. SPACE pauses the directory and RUN/STOP stops it.

The turbo itself likes to let you know it's there by sporadically flashing the screen whenever it's performing a turbo type feat. The advert claims that *Quickdisc* will speed up disk operations by up to a factor of five. This isn't true though the speed improvement is still quite impressive. The table below shows how long in seconds it took to load and save out a 16K block of memory with, and without, the turbo.




Other handy extras found within the 8K ROM are a fast file copier, a disk back—up routine and a fast formatter. The copier is a simple affair that allows different files to be copied from disk to disk with only one drive. More than one file can be copied at a time and all the usually time hungry loading/saving is performed at turbo speed. Disk back up copies a whole disk in several passes taking a total of three minutes to do the job. Fast format claims to format from new a whole 5 and a quarter in ten seconds. These must be Evesham seconds as in real time it takes slightly longer than that, only a little bit longer though. Definitely an improvement on the couple of minutes that you're supposed to wait.

Because of the complex cartridge switching techniques (which the inlay informs were developed on the Isle of Wight) *Quickdisc* is supposed to use absolutely no memory at all. Don't believe it, after a bit of experimentation I soon found that it was prone to messing about with some of zero page. Still as long as you are aware of the problem it shouldn't prove to be one. With commercial software there weren't many problems to be found at all, the *Quickdisc* performing admirably throughout.

A handy addition *Quickdisc* offers the 64 is a reset switch. No more fiddly messing with paper clips around the user port. What's more, programs normally protected against resetting are rendered helpless when *QD*'s reset is hit. This makes the implementations of Mr Penn's pokes very easy indeed.

For £19.95 *Quickdisc* is just the sort of thing that any habitual 1541 user should have. It quickly proves to be an invaluable aid and you soon start wondering how you ever did without it. Whoever at Evesham designed this little wonder had a good idea of exactly what is wrong with Commodore disk drives and has quite satisfactorily put it right with *Quickdisc*.

*Freeze Frame* is available for £39.95, and *Quickdisc* for £19.95 from **Evesham Micro Centre, Bridge Street, Evesham, Worcester WR11 4RY**

**Table showing time in seconds for various disk operations.**

| | Normal | Turbo |
|---|---|---|
| 16K Load | 43 | 10 |
| 16K Save | 55 | 27 |

**That's enough techno-talk for one month. If anyone has technical queries, worries or requires hi-tech advice, you can write to — ah, well there's a small problem, since no one's come up with a proper title yet. Tell you what, Roger Kean has generously allowed me to run a competition. What you have to do is think up a really good title for this section. Send your ideas to GARY LIDDON'S BIT IN THE MIDDLE** (isn't that dreadful?), **ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 12, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.** The prize for the best title is a reset switch, hand picked from my paper clip box. Meanwhile, any technical letters to the address above.

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# ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 For JUNE 1986

**Chart Voting Draw Winners . . .**
**Winner** (£40 worth of software plus T-shirt): **Paul Robinson**, Newbury, Berkshire; **Runners up** (ZZAP! T-shirt and cap): **Damian Campbell**, Redhill, Surrey; **Simon Heraty**, Bushbury, West Midlands; **Richard Vidal**, Kensal Green, London NW10; **Chris Dickson**, Epsom, Surrey.

**1.** *(1)* **PARADROID** (10%)
HEWSON, £7.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

**2.** *(-)* **URIDIUM** (8%)
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**3.** *(5)* **MERCENARY** (7%)
NOVAGEN, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
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**4.** *(2)* **WINTER GAMES** (7%)
US GOLD/EPYX, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
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**5.** *(4)* **SUMMER GAMES II** (5%)
US GOLD/EPYX, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

**6.** *(18)* **BOUNDER** (4%)
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
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**7.** *(9)* **WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST** (4%)
MELBOURNE HOUSE, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 93%

**8.** *(12)* **PITSTOP II** (3%)
US GOLD/EPYX, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 91%

**9.** *(23)* **THE EIDOLON** (3%)
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

**10.** *(7)* **ELITE** (2%)
FIREBIRD, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 95%

**11.** *(6)* **LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

**12.** *(3)* **COMMANDO**
ELITE, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 77%

**13.** *(8)* **RAMBO**
OCEAN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 65%

**14.** *(30)* **THING ON A SPRING**
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 93%

**15.** *(11)* **BALLBLAZER**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 98%

**16.** *(21)* **DROPZONE**
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 95%

**17.** *(16)* **MONTY ON THE RUN**
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 90%

**18.** *(17)* **KUNG-FU MASTER**
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
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**19.** *(13)* **WHO DARES WINS II**
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**20.** *(14)* **ROCK 'N' WRESTLE**
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ZZAP! rating 53%

**21.** *(-)* **ZOIDS**
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**22.** *(-)* **HARDBALL**
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 93%

**23.** *(10)* **FIGHT NIGHT**
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 93%

**24.** *(-)* **SCARABAEUS**
ARIOLASOFT, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 96%

**25.** *(-)* **KIK START**
MASTERTRONIC, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! rating 91%

**26.** *(-)* **ELEKTRAGLIDE**
ENGLISH SOFTWARE, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 38%

**27.** *(29)* **NODES OF YESOD**
ODIN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 95%

**28.** *(24)* **REVS**
FIREBIRD, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 96%

**29.** *(15)* **KORONIS RIFT**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! rating 96%

**30.** *(22)* **HYPERSPORTS**
IMAGINE, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

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5 .....

***ZZAP! TOP 30, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB***

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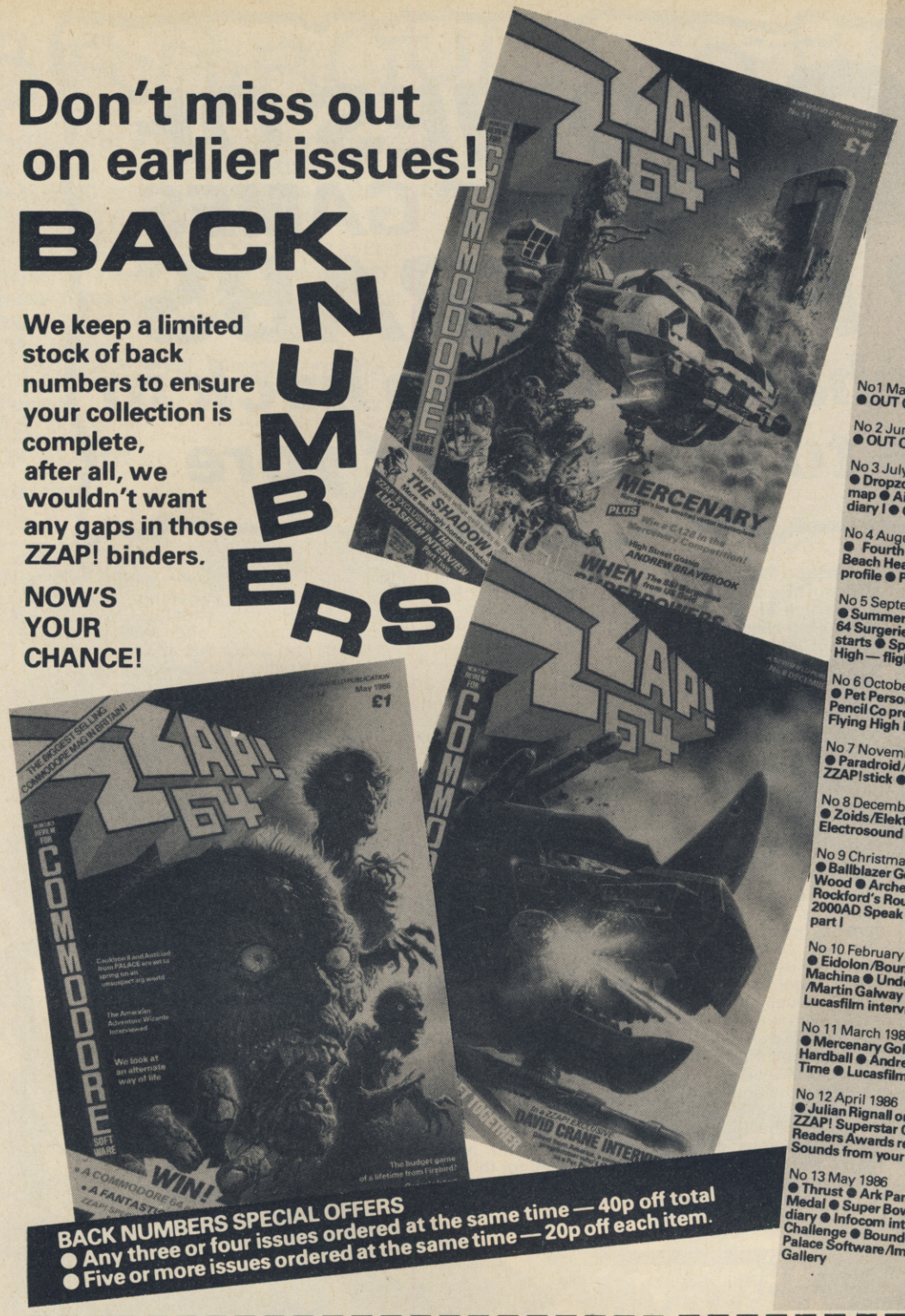

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**BACK NUMBERS, ZZAP! 64 MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

# 50 COPIES OF KNIGHT GAMES UP FOR GRABS

## Your chance to step back in time to the days of yore

Being a rough tough tin suited tearaway was a whole heap of fun, back in the days of Merrie England when King Arthur and his crew ruled the roost.

A little research reveals that one member of the ZZAP! team has a heraldic history — Gary Liddon's great-great-great-great (and so on for ages) great-Grandad was Sir Scoffalot, knight of this realm. Which explains why Lumpy Liddon fights his food to the very death. Nowadays, of course, he doesn't actually have to KILL most of what he eats — it comes ready dead and cooked. El Corpulente still splurges gallons of red sauce all over the shop, however, to add to the effect of corpulent carnage that he likes to create on the table/desk/floor to stimulate his digestive juices.

Watching Sir Scoffalot junior (heraldic device: sossy sarnie rampant with cour de chip) at work is a treat for serious students of foodology — especially those interested in the historical aspects of the discipline. Liddon's eating habits are truly mediaeval!

The programming team at English Software have obviously never had the privilege of being in the fallout zone when Sir Scoffalot is at work - they'd never have been able to concentrate on writing the code for *Knight Games* if they had . . . (Rumours that Domark's next game is going to be called *Liddon Eats Lunch*, accompanied with a realistic sound effect quiz which requires you to guess what is actually being eaten, are totally without foundation. The Advertising Standards Authority, Moral Majority, Viewers and Listeners Association and so would never stand for it.)

As it is, English Software are putting the final touches to their mediaeval combat game, which allows you to sample the delights of ancient fights. Two kinds of swordfighting, a Crossbow Contest, Quarterstaff bout, Ball and Chain session, Pike Staff Proddaround and Archery contest are all included in the game, as well as a fight to the death with a mad Axeperson. No Sir Scoffalot scenario, unfortunately — they hadn't heard of Liddon's ancient ancestor.

Which is where you come in, dear readers. Fifty copies of *Knight Games* are on offer in this contest, and what this Minion wants you to do is come up with a mini scenario that might fit in with the rest of the *Knight Games* scenario; one that features either Sir Scoffalot or the present day Black Belt 10th Dan in Solo Foodfighting, Gary Liddon.

Strengthen those stomachs, oh putatitve entrants, and come up with a drawing or painting of the scene as Sir S or Gary L sits down to a bout of merciless food wrestling. Whizz your entries off to SIR SCOFFALOT, ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire to arrive by 12th June when your ever faithful Minion will ready himself for the stomach-turning sight of your entries with a handful of Rennies (as used by Roger *Gannet* Kean to settle his stomach after eating all the sweeties that arrive in the office with Press Releases).

Burp! Best of luck!

# B·B·B·BOUND TO BE A HIT..

"10 levels of fun make this torture excellent value for money. Nova rating. Definitely one of those 'just another go' games. Game of the month February" – Computer Gamer

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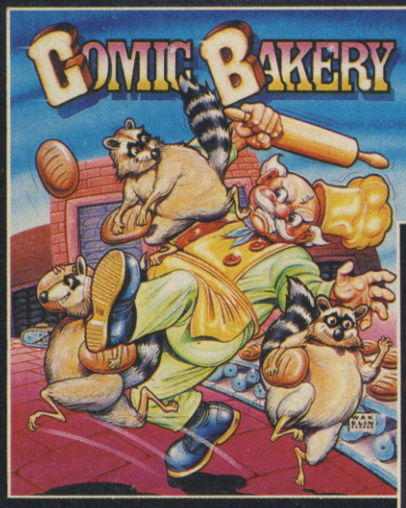

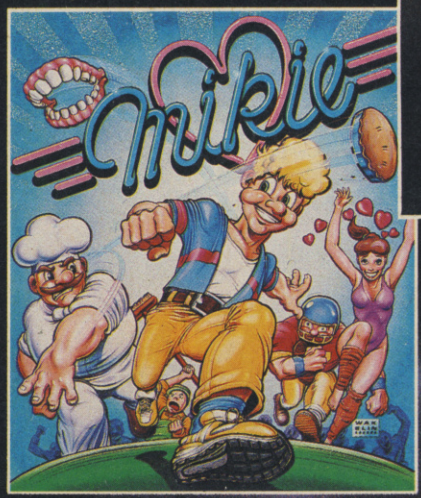


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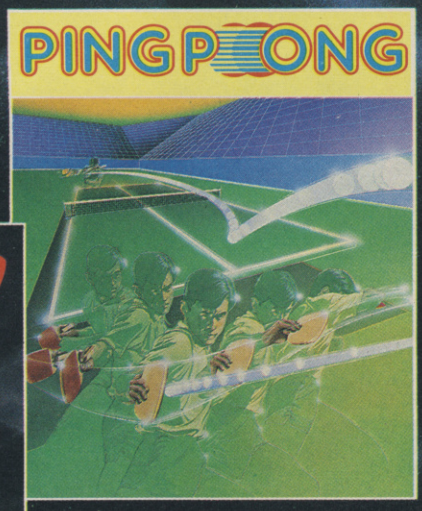

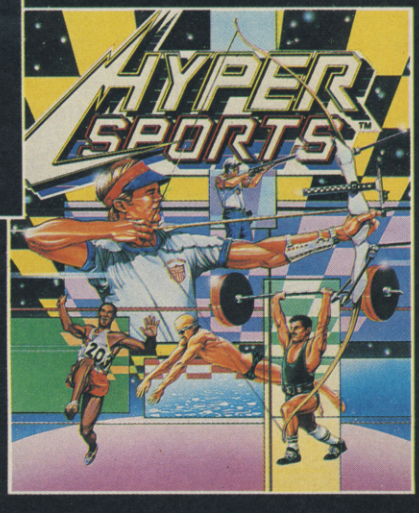


RCADE
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# NEWS OF THE WEATHER, STARGATE AND . . . CNET

Well another month has passed and this time we found ourselves sitting in the middle of the flat floor saying things like: *'Nice weather for the time of the year, isn't it?'*
*'No.'*
*'Oh.'* and: *'Fancy a quick game of Stargate?'*
'No.'
'Oh.' until someone said: *'How about logging onto Compunet?'*
*'Yeah!'*
*'Oh!'*

Quite a few new things have sprung up in the DEC 10 recently and one of them, sitting rather innocuously at **181630**, is a new section called **Live Action**. It was set up during one of **John Krzesinski**'s days off (!?) and consists of several demos that can be viewed whilst still online. There are now dozens of pictures — some old, some new — in link format which means that you don't have to firstly save out any pictures, then turn off the computer, remove the modem and power up again before you can actually see them.

Ardent fans of **Rob Hubbard (RH6)** will be pleased to hear that he is now on Compunet and has his own directory in the Concert Hall section of the Music Hall. GOTO **178836** to find a neat rendition of a Mozart piece (the Horse of the Year show music), along with some other more notable and impressive works. Friendly old **Mastertronic** have given the Mighty Rob permission to UPLD a lot of his music written for them, so you'll find stuff like *The Last V8*, *Master of Magic*, *Kentilla* and *Phantoms of the Asteroid* in his directory. Also GOTO **178834** and get the **Mighty Bogg**'s three new 'singles' — **'Grouting'**, **'Ftang Ftang'** and **'Biscuit Barrel'**. They can be found in his directory along with three previous releases, **'Shoe'**, **'Lettuce'** and **'Detergent'**, and also **The Bogg Album**, a collection of his earlier works which have been tarted up a bit.

The latest hip and trendy thing seems to be putting out little demos replete with a sycophantic scrolling message bearing dedications to various CNETters. People receiving the most 'hellos' seem to be YAK, BOB, MACHUS, and YORC along with some of other Net personalities. ZZAP! wouldn't mind, but . . . Well, we never get mentioned and it's always a bit of a come down when the last character scrolls by and we find that we've been completely and utterly ignored. I mean, as everybody knows we're all ego merchants too . . . Ho hum.

Oh yes, **MACH 81**'s screen editor enhancer, mentioned last month, can be found at **174824** — and while you're at it you can get the editor emulator from page **130517**, it costs 50p but it means you can use both editor and enhancer without the modem plugged in. However, it may be easier with the black slab in the machine's rear after all, since the emulator takes rather a long time to load.

There are two new **Hugh Riley** piccies in his Hall of Fame directory — a text frame called **Dial-a-God** (v good) and a high-res work entitled **Bringdown** (very neat indeed) which manages to recreate the horrible paranoia of lift journeys. Page **129882** is where these wonders reside, along with all of Hugh's other work. See next month's Art Gallery for piccies and Van Reuben appraisal.

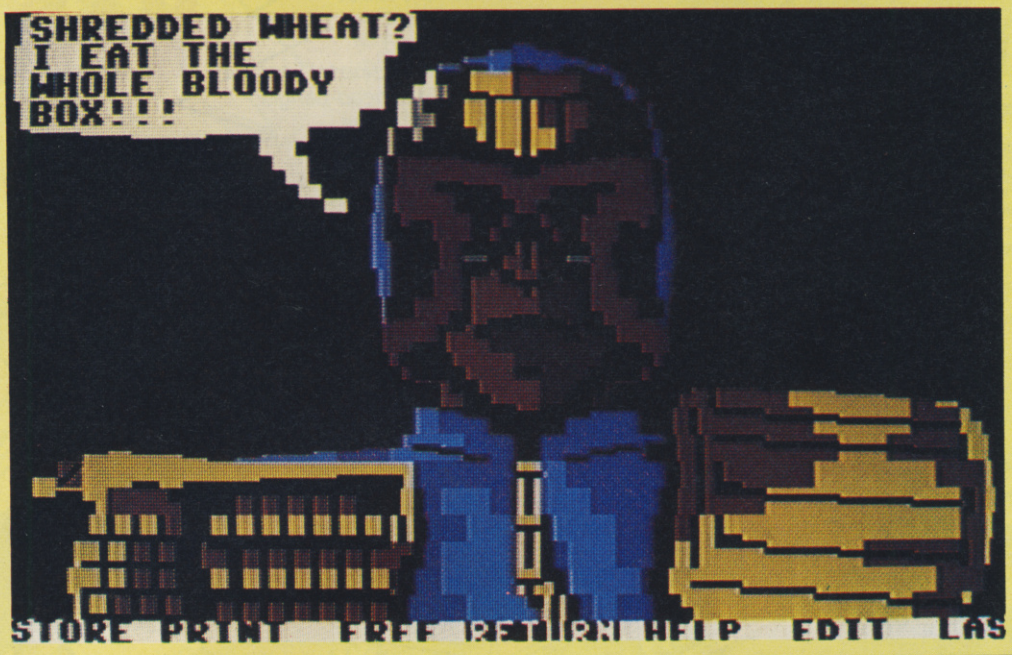
Finally, this month's special mention must go to **H Gruninger (HG83)** who has UPLDed some piccies — **Paul Young**, **ZZ Top** and **Rockford** — into the virtually empty (ahem — apologies, we have been very busy of late but there will be some stuff UPLDed in the near future) Nozin' Aroun' section in the ZZAP! 64 bit of the Zap Club. Thank you H.

'Gasp! I never knew there was so much in it!' The lads are awestruck by the size of their first Compunet bill.

**Compunet** is a People's communication bank, a bank in the sense that CNETTERS can 'bank' ideas for others to look at, admire, deride or use. In the first instance, the people at Compunet decided the sorts of areas that they should create for people to use, but they were still surprised at the use that was made of the Net. It wasn't, for instance, expected that users would start offering arty pictures, but that is just what happened, proving that people will always do something different with a medium to what you expected. **Art Gallery** is a good example of how by providing a public vehicle, many computer owners who have never drawn or painted anything in their lives before, suddenly turn into artists. It's a satisfyingly self-perpetuating cycle; a few pictures on the Net and others join in, the competition spurs each to improve and allows others to draw on the gathering experience. Before you know it, a whole culture that never existed before is there to enrich all who log on.

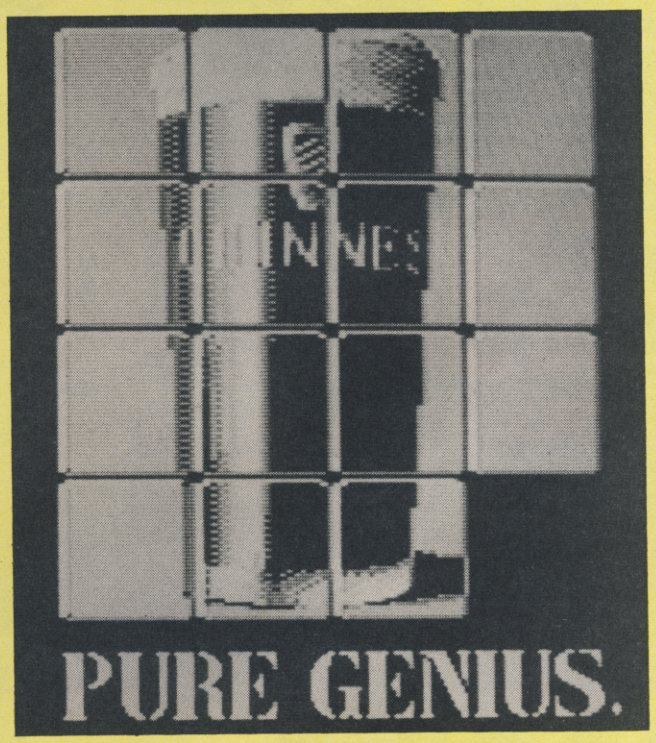
Recently, **Art Gallery**'s contributions have expanded its horizons. The early static representations have gone live, adding the cartoon humour of animated films (see Richard Hare's **The Light Went Out** in the Link Art section). We have already printed the **Headroom Triptych** by Bob Stevenson, where Max's head revolves through three frames. Just now, someone has taken the original, coloured it blue, removed the animation screen glitch, re-animated it and put the 'improved' version back on the Net — an interesting example of the co-operation made possible by electronic communications and the fact that people can use each other's material freely even though they may never have met each other. This month we have two pictures which inadequately demonstrate clever use of image and movement on a 'Guinnes' Ad, as well as two other offerings. Over to Ms Brigitte Van Reuben . . .

# THE ART GALLERY

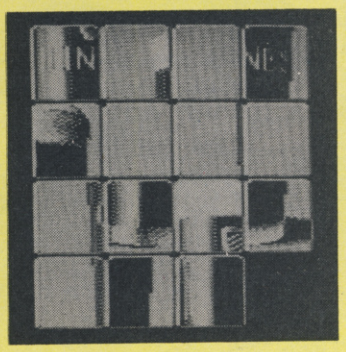



**THE SHREDDED DREDD**
It's interesting to see Stu Jackson turn his 'popular iconographic' eye to the eternal theme of Judge Dredd. The plastic qualities of the image are paramount in this classic 'pyramidal' composition, the Commodore's low-res blocky graphics cleverly heightening the comic strip source. The Judge has been rendered in an almost abstract manner, an inconoclastic slab of unmoved inhumanity. To reinforce the comic strip feel, Jackson has added a speech bubble with a purposefully humourous statement which successfully combines two disparate ideas — an acceptance that all who view the picture will understand the reference to the well known advertising punch line, and accept that only Judge Dredd could be so macho as to do what no one else could.

**MARILYN**
Stu Jackson's second work returns to an older theme of Pop artists, the dream machine's greatest Goddess, Marilyn Monroe. With broad sweeps of the brush, Jackson has used chiaro scuro with effect to create a dreamy, hazy, spotlit image of the starlet, leaning forward with that famous remotely beckoning look, as though inviting us to join her dream while warning by body language that its fabric is fraught with insecurity and unhappiness. The simplicity of the technique employed belies the extraordinary sohpistication of the image.




**PURE GENIUS**
These two frames represent only the start and finish of an animated sequence which shuffles the blocks around until the final, understandable image appears — a glass of Guinness. This example of co-operation between two artists, Douglas Hare and Bob Stevenson, combines striking imagery with a lively concept, in which both picture and idea suit the medium of the advert which has inspired the work — Pure Genius. There is a precedent in the disjointed polaroid collages of David Hockney, almost a return to the precepts of Cubism in which multiple images of the same object can add up to a greater emotional impact than a single representation.



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Ever since I got my inquisitive infantine head stuck in our ten year old dented kettle I've wanted to be a 'droid'! And here I am controlling N.O.M.A.D. a real raunchy robot — if it had a wit as sharp as it's sting it could put Little and Large back in the funny business! I'm after Cyrus T. Gross, a real head-banger who's attacking me with all the hardware he can get his hands on but when N.O.M.A.D.'s in gear with his Magnum's blasting Cyrus could end up just a bad memory!
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I missed the film but I've got all the action here...in fact if Thorn EMI wanna make Rambo Strikes Back all they have to do is film me in action on this joystick. I picked up my machine gun, wiped out half the jungle with my explosive war head, (that's not my brain!), but that look-out post just keeps on zapping me — I'll get him next time round. I haven't got to the chopper yet... I've got to get my act together, if Thorn EMI saw my last attempt it'd only be good for Rambo Carries on Laughing!
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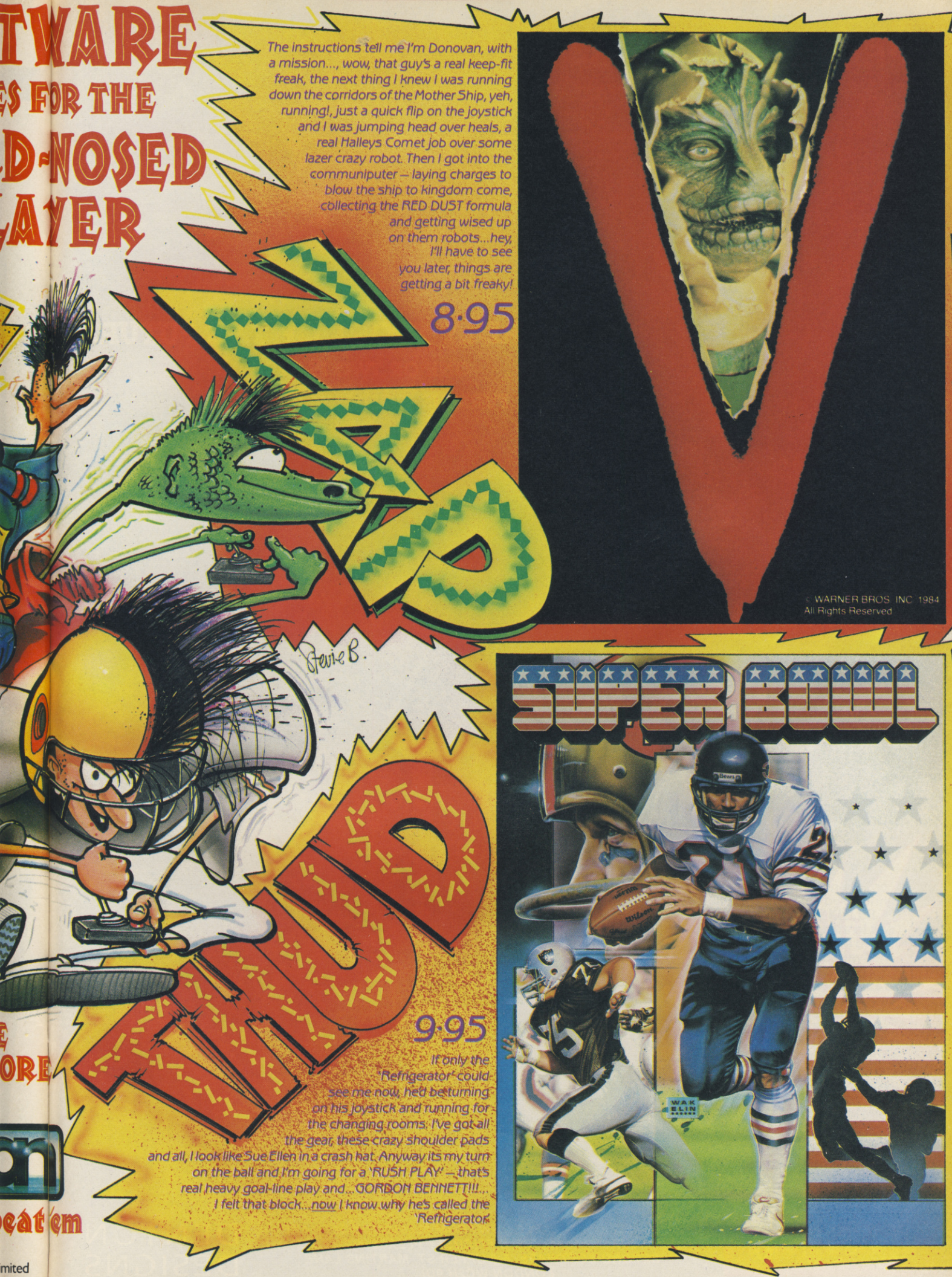


*The instructions tell me I'm Donovan, with a mission..., wow, that guy's a real keep-fit freak, the next thing I knew I was running down the corridors of the Mother Ship, yeh, running!, just a quick flip on the joystick and I was jumping head over heals, a real Halleys Comet job over some lazer crazy robot. Then I got into the communiputer – laying charges to blow the ship to kingdom come, collecting the RED DUST formula and getting wised up on them robots...hey, I'll have to see you later, things are getting a bit freaky!*

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*If only the 'Refrigerator' could see me now, he'd be turning on his joystick and running for the changing rooms. I've got all the gear, these crazy shoulder pads and all, I look like Sue Ellen in a crash hat. Anyway its my turn on the ball and I'm going for a 'RUSH PLAY' – that's real heavy goal-line play and...GORDON BENNETT!!!... I felt that block...now I know why he's called the 'Refrigerator'.*

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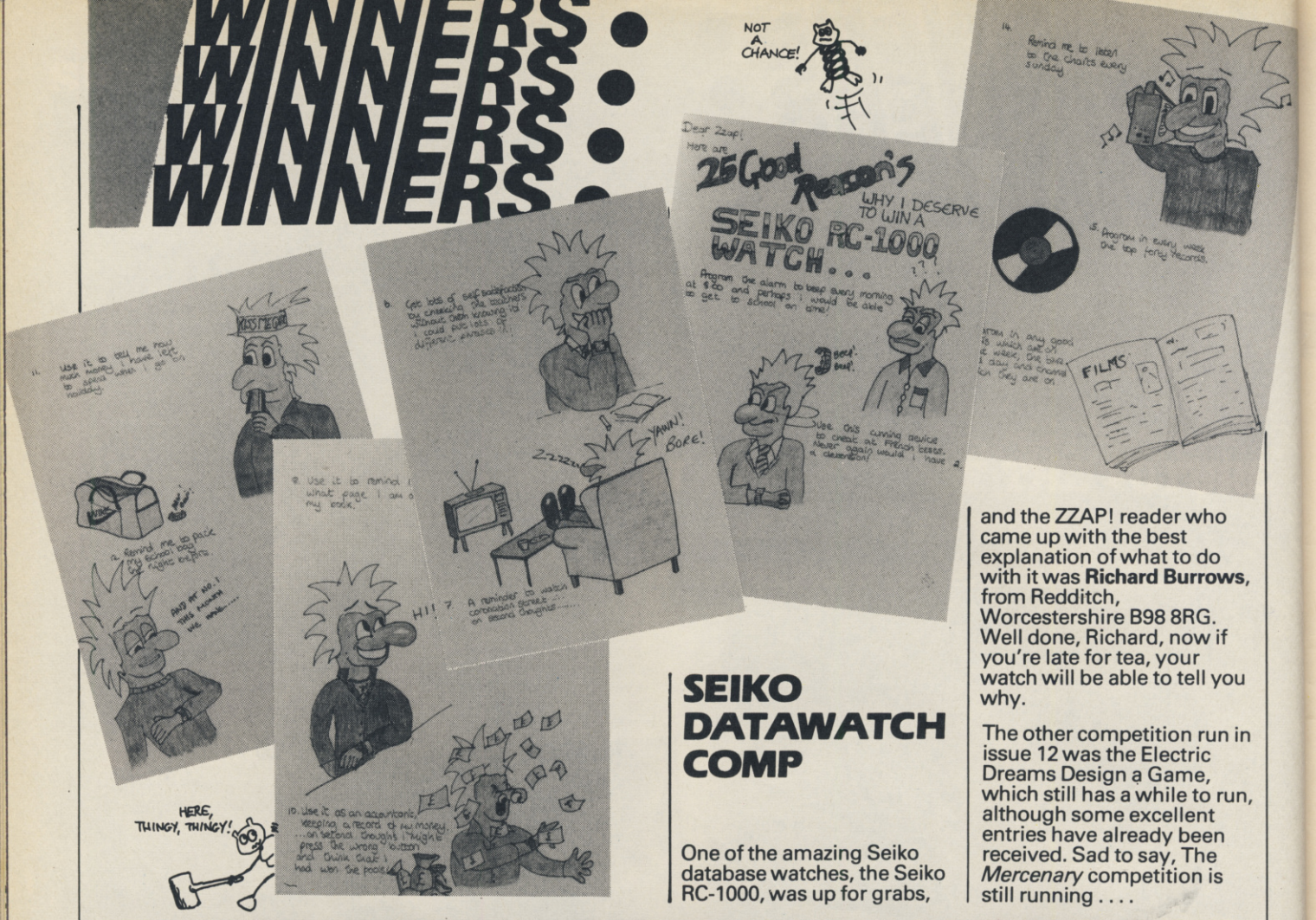
# WINNERS • WINNERS • WINNERS • WINNERS •

## SPRITICIDE WITH GAME KILLER

Robtek were inciting some spritely violence by offering 10 of their GAME KILLER programs to winners of this comp to draw scenes of sprite murder and mayhem. The overall winner also receives the added bonus of a visit to Robtek's factory at Church Crookham, near Aldershot, and the lucky person is **Alan Thomson**, from Workingham, Cumbria CA14 5BE. The runners-up are:

**John Picken, County Durham, DL14 9TQ; Simon Baldwin, East Sussex, TN37 6QY; Anthony Hughes, Shropshire, TF12 5EQ; Luis Troyano, Cheshire, SK1 3PF; Adam Firth, Herefordshire, HR6 0LH; Steven Bedser, Ropley, Hants; Dave Plank, Kent, BR6 8DF; Anurag Sharma, Gateacre, L25 5LA; R Purvis, Livingston, EH54 6RE**




## SEIKO DATAWATCH COMP

One of the amazing Seiko database watches, the Seiko RC-1000, was up for grabs, and the ZZAP! reader who came up with the best explanation of what to do with it was **Richard Burrows**, from Redditch, Worcestershire B98 8RG. Well done, Richard, now if you're late for tea, your watch will be able to tell you why.

The other competition run in issue 12 was the Electric Dreams Design a Game, which still has a while to run, although some excellent entries have already been received. Sad to say, The *Mercenary* competition is still running ....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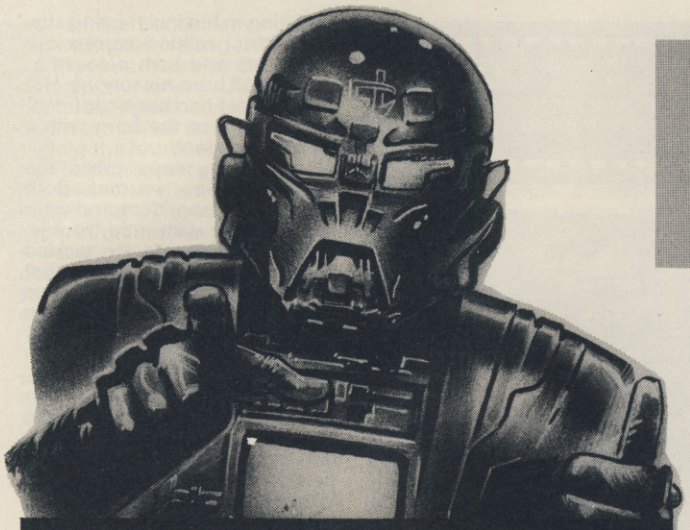


## THE RETURN OF THE THING

**The last two months have been one long strain on my bodily functions. First there was the programmer's challenge — not so much a case of ego, more Superego. Why pasty-faced beings like those miserable specimens that spend most of their lives in darkened rooms in front of glowing monitors are idolised I don't know. Has the human race a future to look forward to?**

**Then there was last month's in-house challenge. Once again the crazed, ego-driven maniacs who populate the dark corners of ZZAP! Towers crawled out on their slimy bellies and presented themselves in front of the camera lens. Now, at long last, we return to the relative normality of the challenge arena where one brave member of the ZZAP! readership travels to the primeval hamlet of Ludlow to do battle with the so-called ZZAP! champion.**

**The evil toad Julian Rignall won the in-house challenge last month, and with some effort he managed to squeeze his inflated sense of importance in front of a Commodore this month in order to play against my worthy challenger. The feeble bodied Rignall wasn't that proficient at *Uridium* — the knowledge that Super-wimp's highscore was only 132,500 settled my minds that *Uridium* was to be the challenge game when I received *Mick O'Reilly*'s claimed score of 601,020. My confidence levels soared as I arranged for Mick to be imported from his homebase in Rishton, Lancashire.**

**After running a check through my databanks on the appointed day, I discover that Mo, as he likes to call himself, has been a consistent highscorer since issue three and his name has appeared in just about every one of my highscore charts since then. Such experience must mean that I am likely to be pleased by Rignall's crushing defeat . . .**

### DREADNOUGHT DEMOLITION

I am pleased to see that Mick brings his own joystick, a well worn but highly polished Euro-max Competition Pro: a sign of a true professional indeed. The vile one instantly starts complaining that he hasn't had a chance to practise because his Commodore power supply has had a headache for several days. Ha! A likely story. Once the two players are settled in front of their machines and the rules explained — the first to pass 50,000 wins the game and the contest is to be best of three — I order combat to commence.

Mo immediately demonstrates his obvious superiority, swiftly disposing of wave after wave of alien craft. Judging by the tortured grimaces twisting the skinny wimp's pallid and unhealthy features, Riggers is suffering from Mortis and is far from relaxed. My assumptions are rapidly confirmed when Superwimp flies his craft straight into a barrier wall: what an imbecile!

While Rignall tries to settle into playing Braybrook's block-buster, the Lancashire lad lands on the first ship, deals with the bonus stage swiftly and earns maximum points with poetic ease. The parochial prat Rignall struggles wimpfully to complete the first wave as Mo starts on the second wave — a full 4,000 points in front. I lean back into my hover chair and sip on my Domestos cocktail, getting that warm feeling as the delicious drink thickens on contact and clings to the lining of my alimentary canal imparting those heady chlorine ions which make my metabolism race. I am beginning to enjoy myself.

Rignall finishes the first wave. I watch with glee as he fouls up the bonus stage, gaining a mere 3,600 points. Mo pulls ahead at speed, and still hasn't lost a life. Rignall is struggling in the wake of this worthy gamesmaster. HO! Rignall loses yet another life as three looping aerial mines lock onto him. The wretched one struggles as the 'LAND NOW' signal sounds and just as he lines up his ship to land on the runway, a renegade alien craft speeds in, letting rip with a volley of bullets and destroying his ship a split second before he can land. My joy circuits nearly short out as the chlorine ions do their work, aided and abetted by this wondrous sight. An expression of severe rage and annoyance clouds the egocentric idiot's disgusting countenance: Wignall's Cwoss!

While all these delightful things are happening, Mick manages to land on the third ship, and is tackling the bonus stage by the time I regain sufficient composure to monitor his progress. Again, he collects maximum points leaving Rignall a massive 10,000 points in the rear. Mo tackles the fourth ship and he clocks up points like a veritable professional. He drives onwards towards the magic 50,000 target. Rignall, realising that he is falling behind, tries harder. His feeble efforts to decrease the gap come too late, though, and Mo speeds through the 50,000 barrier with Rignall trailing 9,000 points behind him.

### THE EXCITEMENT MOUNTS

A fresh bowl of Domestos is called for by way of celebration. My challenger has one win under his belt and his confidence mounts. The spiky haired creep looks even more wretched than he normally does, a good sign for the future. I immediately order the second game to commence, capitalising on JR's confusion. Both players start well and complete the first wave easily, scoring maximum points. The two continue to play competently, and I notice that for the first time that the baby faced insect has contrived to take the lead by 1,000 points. I hope this is merely a temporary setback, but after Rignall glances across and spots that he is in fact in the lead, he perks up. New life, if it can be called that, is pumped into the foul creature's miserable physique. Obviously some primeval hormone secretion which he calls on in times of stress is being produced and injected into his scraggy body. My bespectacled challenger seems shaken by his opponent's reincarnation and the following lapse of concentration sends his ship crashing into a super structure.

This fires on the undead creature even further, and soon Rignall is a full 5,000 points ahead. But then a surprise attack catches the ZZAP! beast off-guard and the resultant loss of life dents his new-found confidence. Another loss of life a few seconds later and my challenger catches up! Potential disaster is averted, and I rub my hands together in preparation for a

whitewash when . . . Oh, such a fool! Mo fouls his bonus screen completely by pressing the fire button at the wrong moment. The resultant bonus score of 2,600 gives Rignall the chance to pull ahead. I wait for him to land and hope that he is about to mess up. Unfortunately the idiot capitalises on my challenger's error and pulls back into the lead, this time by a full 5,000 points.

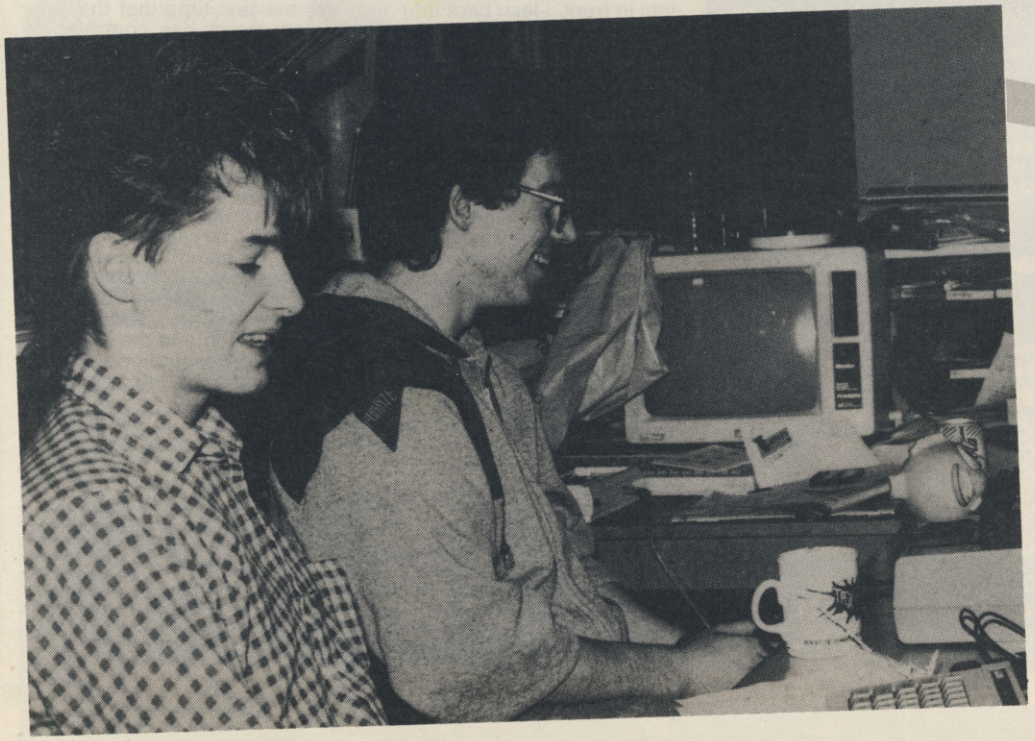
Both players steam on, neither one losing a life on the next two ships. Rignall hangs on to his advantage grimly and passes the 50,000 mark with Mo, not far behind, scoring 48,050 points. It is one game each, and I am not sure if finishing the entire bottle of Domestos Premier Cru was altogether a wise idea. All hangs on this final game and I need my neural circuits in fine order if I am to concentrate fully on encouraging Mo to a deserved victory.

Dim Dim watches on as Mo gets into the groove before the contest begins. Note his special can of Cherry flavoured Coke — Mo claims it helps him concentrate. I cannot see the appeal — it has no bouquet when compared to Premier Cru Domestos . . .

## THE FINAL CONFLICT

My challenger displays his mettle: he continues to look cool and unruffled by the vile one's lucky win. I order a coffee break to calm things down. Perchance I will gain some small advantage on behalf of my challenger by ensuring that Rignall's cup is chipped and the coffee within boiling hot and foul tasting. I toy with the idea of adding the last few drops of premier Cru Domestos from the bottom of the tasteful blue bottle to see what strange effect it might have on Rignall's beefburger and grease drive metabolism, but restrain myself at the last moment. He may be able to claim ill-health if I experiment, and abandon the contest as a draw, retiring for an afternoon's avid video tape watching in his foul nesting site. My faithful minion carries out my orders and I am pleased to see Rignall burn his tongue. Ha! Would that I had been confident enough to lace the burn with a few chlorine ions . . .

Rignall stares wanly at his desk at the moment of defeat. Note the quiet smile of victory that plays around Mo's lips. Is Dim Dim really wagging his tail with joy?



Two empty cups grace the table, and play resumes. Both players look confident and clear the first ship with little trouble. The bonus screens are tackled and I am pleased to see that Rignall fails just before he reaps the maximum points. Mo scores full points and the small advantage he earns seems to spur him on. Come on, my worthy challenger! After clearing three groups of aliens on the second ship Rignall runs into trouble and is destroyed by alien gunfire; oh that this were not a game but a real space battle! Almost immediately I hear a groan delivered in an unmistakably northern accent. My challenger, too, has lost a life.

Mo retains the advantage, but the brainless one is swiftly clearing group after group of alien craft. The 'LAND NOW' signals cry in unison and both players land, almost simultaneously. The noise created by both bonus screens going appears to disorientate the two and they both quit at the fourth bonus. As the dreadnought dissolves I check both scores and a wave of pleasure sweeps through my body as I see that Mo has retained his advantage and is still 1,000 points ahead. My hearts begin to beat faster, out of synchronisation as the excitement mounts. I find myself leaning forward, transfixed by the closeness of the scores.

The third ship claims another of my challenger's lives and the delay caused by his demise gives the feeble wimp the chance to make up the small deficit. This he does with vigour, using the situation to pull slightly ahead. I curse as he grins inanely, but as usual the fool becomes overconfident. Promoted by his own short lived success, his grin turns sour as his ship smashes into a barrier. I am unable to restrain my mirth, and it bursts forth in the form of waves of bleachy laughter. Either the smell of chlorine or the deafening sound of my amusement unnerves Rignall and he makes another mistake, almost immediately. This time he flies straight underneath a group of aliens, who jump upon the opportunity and pump his undefended rear full of bullets. As this takes place my challenger lands and presses home his advantage by securing maximum po-

# LENGE CHA

ints on the bonus screen. This leaves Rignall trailing behind — 7,000 points in arrears. Sadly the difference is soon cut to 2,000 points as Rignall lands and completes the bonus screen.

Onto the fourth ship now, and the Rishton rocket grimly retains his lead. There is much joystick toggling, and Rignall puts maximum effort into his game. Slowly he starts to catch up on my challenger . . . my hearts beat faster as the manic ZZAP! thing closes the gap — 2,000, 1,700, 1,300 . . .

Mo is the first to land on the ship and again he reaps maximum points. Rignall comes into land moment later and also collects the maximum bonus. Time is slowly running out for Rignall, and I whisper alien prayers under my breath to help my heroic challenger along. The scores read 41,025 to 42,200 as both players tackle the fifth ship. Soon the contest will be over, and I promise myself a case of Domestos by way of celebration if Rignall is defeated. Realising that it is possible to reach 50,000 before landing, both players go full out to destroy as many fleets of aliens as possible. The gap remain constant and I pray that there will be no mistake from my challenger — one slip could give the revolting one an advantage! At 49,000 points the tension is broken by the sound of the 'LAND NOW' signal coming from my challenger's monitor. My hearts almost jump from their securing brackets as he whizzes through a miniscule gap in the barrier and onto the runway — 'By 'eck,' my challenger shouts in his quaint accent, 'that were close!' A few seconds later, at 48,500 points, Rignall's monitor also sounds the siren, but in his haste to negotiate the gap the stupid creature fails to turn his ship on his side. Even he knows you can't fit a square peg in a round hole and his ship is destroyed, leaving my challenger to hurtle past the 50,000 barrier with ease. He has won!

Mo has wiped the floor with the foul Rignall — all he is good for. Collapsing, exhausted, into the welcoming comfort of my hoverchair I remind myself of the good times that lie ahead as I work my way steadily through a dozen blue bottles.

**The victor of the** *Uridium* contest gets the chance to do to Rignall what I have always wanted to do myself. Sadly Mo's not pulling hard enough — the tendons in the slimy wimp's neck are hardly stretched taught, let alone at snapping point

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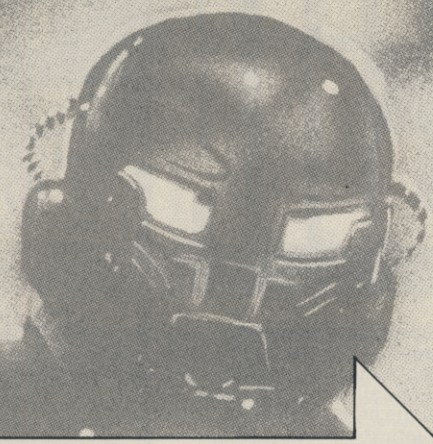

These last few days have been very busy and I feel quite dizzy by all the excitement generated (or perhaps it's the after effects of the two bottles of Domestos I downed to celebrate the fall of the ZZAP! 'champion'). The quality of the scores currently being sent in are of a very high standard and I hope that all of my humble troops will strive to better their already superb efforts. *Uridium*, *Kung-Fu Master*, *Commando* and *Yie Ar Kung-Fu* scores are appearing in huge numbers, but I hope my troops will soon be turning their skills to *Cauldron II*, *Spindizzy*, *Thrust*, *Starquake* and others. Keep practicing, next month another ZZAP! creature will be called up to challenge one of you highscorers.

**ACE (Cascade)**
35,670 Gary Lea, Alton, Hants
29,200 Douglas Phillips, Gillingham, Kent
18,720 D Charlesworth, Wates Orlon, Warks
17,540 George Block, Cheltenham, Glos
17,100 Mark Bours, Congleton, Cheshire
11,750 E Wright, Thundersley, Essex

**BOMB JACK (Elite)**
83,760 Stuart Marsh, London, SE13

**BATALYX (Ariolasoft)**
21,392,784 Steve Pallett, Birmingham
11,508,305 Dan Williams, London, W1

**BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)**
7,263,201 Gary Clarke, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

**BALLBLAZER (Activision)**
*Shut out level 9 droids:*
19.5 secs Dave Franklin, Gloucester
20.0 secs Robbie Graham, Blairgowrie, Perthshire
24.0 secs Paul Nash, Chalkham, Kent
30.0 secs Steve Pallett, Birmingham

**BARRY MCGUIGAN'S BOXING (Activision)**
£14,228,000 Stuart Marsh, London,, SE13
£13,325,000 Paul Hoskings, South Ascot, Berkshire

**COMIC BAKERY (Imagine)**
4,676,840 Paul Dove, Ashfield, Notts
216,700 Garry Watson, Dumfires, Scotland

**CRAZY COMETS (Martech)**
449,270 Martin Keeves, Birmingham
472,923 Gary Clark, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

**COMMANDO (Elite)**
20,069,900 Lee Roome, Stafford, Derby
18,202,500 Paul Chambers, Studley, Warks
18,156,300 Nicholas Holman, London
18,011,300 Mark Wisniewski, Huddersfield, W Yorks
17,375,100 Steve Pallett, Birmingham
16,402,100 Michael Chapman, Co Durham
14,720,500 Gary Lea, Alton, Hants
13,892,900 Heath Robson, Colne, Lancs
12,541,100 Chris Burns, Oldham, Lancs
11,423,900 Mark Slade, Liverpool
10,675,500 James Crosby, Manchester
7,351,100 Stuart Marsh, London, SE13

**CRITICAL MASS (Durell)**
144,050 Josh Bradbury, Cambridge

**DESERT FOX (US Gold)**
94,000 Andrew Rogers, Bakewell, Derbyshire
67,200 Stephen Moore, Litherland, Liverpool
47,800 Gary Scott, Peterborough

**DRAGONSKULLE (Ultimate)**
116,450 N Parker, Gillingham, Kent
115,990 Glenn Black, Gainsborough, Lincs

**THE EIDOLON (Activision)**
351,241 Kinnon Paterson, Middlesbrough, Cleveland
162,344 Michael Beaman, Retford, Notts
69,600 Evan McDougal, Dumbarton, Scotland
63,780 Graeme Carlyle, Grangemouth, Scotland
61,460 Tony Cafferkey, London N17
56,240 Adrian Miles, Grimsby, S Humbs

**ELEKTRAGLIDE (English Software)**
460,166 James Duffy, Coventry
132,097 P Oliver, Mosely, Birmingham
59,018 Andrew Chapple, Moseley, Birmingham
56,134 Dan Williams, London W1
26,023 M Platts, Worcester

**ENCOUNTER (Novagen)**
438,500 Andy Clifford, Aylestone, Leics

**GRIBBLY'S DAY OUT (Hewson)**
10,926 Nicholas Woodruff, Stourbridge, W Mids

**KUNG-FU MASTER (US Gold)**
5,730,900 Richard Scaplehorn, Port Talbot, W Glam
2,164,203 Heath Robson, Colne, Lancs
1,710,399 Mark Goodwin, Rhondda, Mid Glam
1,657,110 Ian Brockett, Manchester
1,556,148 Jawad Saleem, London E10
1,451,146 Andrew Bush, Bristol
1,332,724 Paul Smith, Blackburn, Lancs
1,115,114 Philip Kenny, Coventry
1,110,300 Geoffry Riely, Ipswich, Suffolk
911,463 R Kazalbash, Southend, Essex
808,752 Andi Davis, Rochdale, Lancs
745,400 Mark Bosell, Kenton, Middx
508,367 David Hodgson, Kendal, Kumbria
503,395 Chris Roberts, Middlesbrough, Cleveland

**KORONIS RIFT (Activsion)**
133,250 Gavin Davenport, Little Leigh, Northwich
112,580 Neil Archer, Wolverhampton

**KANE (Mastertronic)**
175,954 Stuart Marsh, London, SE13
109,615 Russell Taylor, Bury, Lancs
72,729 Alex Amuro, Maidstone, Kent
67,135 Simon Clarke, Camberley, Surrey

**MERCENARY (Novagen)**
1,909,000 cr R Treviss, Dorchester, Dorset
1,909,000 cr Graham Stirwell, Peterborough, Cambs
1,909,000 cr Tim Mason, Hallow, Worcs
1,604,000 cr Nicholas Marshall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
1,409,000 cr Kinnon Paterson, Middlsebrough, Cleveland
1,409,000 cr Dean Taylor, Basildon, Essex
1,409,000 cr Bob Chambers, Wolverton, Milton Keynes
1,409,000 cr Gary Taylor, Liverpool, L16

**PARADROID (Hewson Consultants)**
245,840 Nathan Tuck, Norwich, Norfolk
126,835 Kevin Mannion, St Helens, Merseyside
117,530 Andrew Longstone, Cromer, Norfolk
113,445 John Doyle, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire
93,600 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks

**PING PONG (Imagine)**
26,440 Paul Langton, Liverpool L21
24,550 Dan Williams, London, W1
24,060 Andrew Barke, Chesterfield, Derbeyshire
23,850 G Foyle, Sidcup, Kent
10,350 Gary Clark, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

**ROBIN OF THE WOOD (Odin)**
95 overall Simon Clarke, Camberley, Surrey
92 overall Andrew Grainger, Ripon, N Yorks
85 overall Mark Rogers, LLantwit, Mid Glam

**ROCK 'N' WRESTLE (Melbourne House)**
1,001,800 Alan Smith, Fife, Scotland
383,500 Douglas Carey, Chandler's Ford, Hants
367,600 Robert Hunt, Bradford, W Yorks
305,300 William Church, Commonmoor, Liskeard
300,000 Robert McCarthy, Southway, Plymouth
257,600 Andy Logers, Lymm, Cheshire
198,100 Bruce Rowell, Stamford, Lincs
135,000 Paul Anthony, Warmley, Bristol
107,100 Dean Evans, New Maldon, Surrey

**RESCUE ON FRACTALUS (Activision)**
372,427 Derek Muntley, Newhaven, East Sussex

**RAMBO (Ocean)**
4,098,200 Gary Lea, Alton, Hants
3,612,100 Mark Slade, Liverpool
1,825,100 Arran Mclean, Cheadle
1,807,100 Les Farrar, Darwin, Australia
1,596,100 Simon Clarke, Camberley, Surrey
1,339,800 James Alexander, Reigate, Surrey
1,077,500 DJ Saintfield, Co Down
556,100 John Aperghis, Penn, Bucks

**SCARABAEUS (Ariolasoft)**
239,303 Robert Berry, Fleetwood, Lancs

**SKOOLDAZE (Microsphere)**
53,200 Sharron Clifford, Aylestone, Leics
22,820 Robert Barbosa, Reading, Berks

**TRANSFORMERS (Ocean)**
60,283, Gary Clark, Southend-on-Sea, Essex
44,341 Nicholas Woodruff, Stourbridge, W Mids
12,082 Richard Byrne, Enfield, Middx

**URIDIUM (Hewson Consultants)**
1,505,615 Mat Daley, Frimley, Surrey
867,345 Chris Green, Weymouth, Dorset
601,020 Michael O'Reilly, Rishton, Lancs
523,360 Craig Hall, Oldham, Lancs
498,985 Graeme Carlyle, Grangemouth, Scotland
489,800 Nigel Froud, Farncombe, Godalming
486,210 Mark Mosely, Tibshelf, Derbeyshire
437,915 Michael Lykke, 8800 Viborg, Denmark
358,845 David Sexton, London, N4
356,695 Andrew Hudson, Salhouse
348,775 Brian Harper, Hythe, Kent
346,790 Nathan Tuck, Norwich, Norfolk
315,810 Richard Harris, Leeds
299,125 Arashad, Edgebaston, Birmingham

**V (Ocean)**
21,100 Paul Nash, Chalkham, Kent
17,600 Darran Higgins, Grangemouth, Stirlingshire

**YIE AR KUNG-FU (Imagine)**
48,645,400 C Hampson, Derry
38,500,300 Mick O'Reilly, Rishton, Lancs
27,420,400 Paul Murray, Co Durham
11,285,400 Garry Wilkinson, Enfield, Middx
11,150,200 Chris Burns, Oldham, Lancs
10,525,700 Siu Wai Cheung, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs
10,347,300 Colin Maciver, Inchture, Perthshire
10,032,400 Kevin Hall, Mansfield, Notts
9,863,300 C Dickson, Dumfries, Scotland
8,069,400 Adrian Wilson, Melton Mowbray, Leics
7,411,600 Mark Bosell, Kenton, Middx
6,956,100 Stephen Singleton, Whinmoor, Leeds
5,979,400 Dick Hopwood, Wakefield, W Yorks

**Z (Rino)**
277,900 Alex Lindope London E16
167,500 Nick Jowett, Solihull, W Mids
143,800 Shaun Russell, Shildon, Co Durham
125,600 Terry Townshend, Gt Yarmouth, Norfolk
121,700 Julian Smith, Sheffield
99,600 Stuart Marsh, Lonsdon, SE13
65,300 Andrew Roberts, Redditch, Worcs

**All you highscoring girls and boys, send your score(s) unto me. A postcard, letter, sub-etha transmission or the like will do fine. What I want to know is your score, level reached, time taken and any other relevant details (the more the better). Then put your name, address and telephone number (just in case I want to contact you) and send it off to: ZZAP! CHALLENGE, ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.**

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# ZZAPBACK!

**It was around this time last year that strange things happened to ZZAP! Chris Anderson and Bob Wade, then Editor and Software Editor respectively, both left the team to pursue their own interests and the remaining dynamic duo, Gaz and Jaz, moved from Yeovil to Ludlow. Local yokel, Paul Sumner, joined the team on a part-time basis, and the magazine had a slight facelift.**

## BEACH HEAD II
**US Gold**

The tasteful follow-up to *Beach Head* boasts four different action screens, loads of high quality speech, a one or two player head to head option, and stunning graphics. According to Julian '*Beach Head II* must be one of the best games to make its way across the Atlantic', while the fledgling Sumner thought that it 'ought to get the anti-violence brigade 'up in arms''. Gary felt that the actual ideas were 'simple and weak', but admitted that it was 'the two player aspect that puts it so high in my books.'

*The graphics and sonics are superb and I think that they seduced us into making the game a Sizzler. It is a very simple game and on reflection it shouldn't have been rated so highly. Loading the different bits from cassette is a pain.*
**JR**

No, I disagree; *Beach Head II* should have been a Sizzler. Well, the disk version anyway, since we later found out that the cassette version was awkward. The single player game does get boring after a while, but the two player option is great fun. Good for its time, but I doubt it would do so well if reviewed today.
**GP**

(Jaz) Presentation up a little bit — the two player option is fun — hook and lastability both down by ten percent, value for money down to about eighty and overall low eighties.

(Gaz) Sorry to be so boring, but I think the ratings were fine.

## WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST
**Melbourne House**

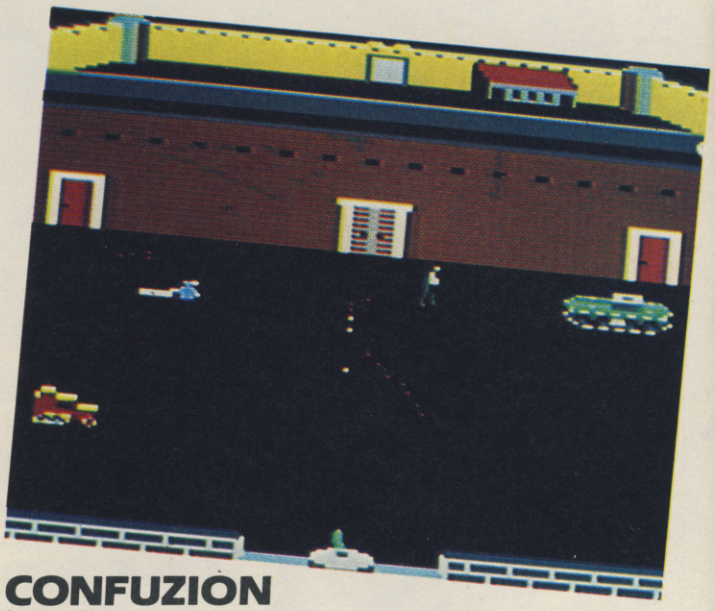
The classic one/two player beat em up arrived at a time when Gary and Julian were mad keen on the kung-fu arcade game *Karate Champ*, and consequently it was very well received. 'I don't think *Exploding Fist* lacks in lasting interest, as it's one of those games that you can get out time and time again to relieve the day's tension' Gary proclaimed. Paul thought that 'the graphics and sound are terrific, the only thing that stops this game short of total realism is blood', and Julian used practically every superlative he could think of, ie, excellent, excellent, excellent. . . .

*The big problem with the review is that we failed to spot the 'safe' move which allows you to beat an opponent time and time again. If we'd discovered the bug then, it wouldn't have been rated so highly. The two player mode is still fun, though.*
**JR**

At the time I thought that *Exploding Fist* was something else, despite the presence of the 'safe' move. However, after seeing *International Karate*, my opinion of *Fist* has lowered somewhat. Nevertheless, I think the review was fine.
**GP**

(Jaz) Lastability down by fifteen percent, and the graphics, value and overall marks by about ten percent.

(Gaz) No, I think the ratings were just right.



## CONFUZION
**Incentive**

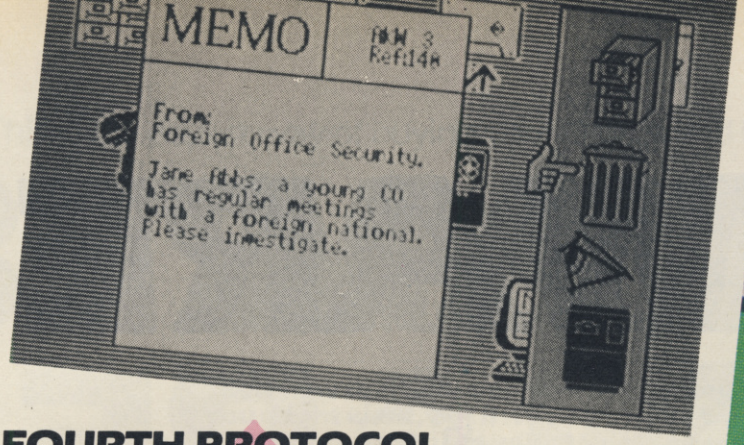
*Confuzion* is an incredibly simple, but addictive and frustrating arcade puzzle. Taking its roots from the arcade game *Guttang Guttong* it had the terrible trio uttering frustrated obscenities long into the night. '*Confuzion* is the best arcade puzzle currently available and I recommend it heartily to all arcade puzzlers or those willing to give it a go' raved Gary. Paul agreed and enthused: 'A number of games succeed because of their simplicity and *Confuzion* is definitely one of them'. Julian, however, warned 'those of you who are about to buy this are likely to suffer from a nervous breakdown.'

*I remember this giving me hours of frustration and it got to the point where I nearly threw my Commodore through the window! It's a really difficult game but totally addictive.*
**JR**

Everything about this game is simple — the graphics, sound and especially the gameplay — but it's great. I would say that we underrated the presentation and music, but otherwise I have no complaints.
**GP**

(Jaz) I enjoyed this relatively cheap game and think we rated it just about right.

(Gaz) Presentation up to high eighties, sound mid nineties and overall dead on ninety.




## FOURTH PROTOCOL
**Hutchinson Computer Press**

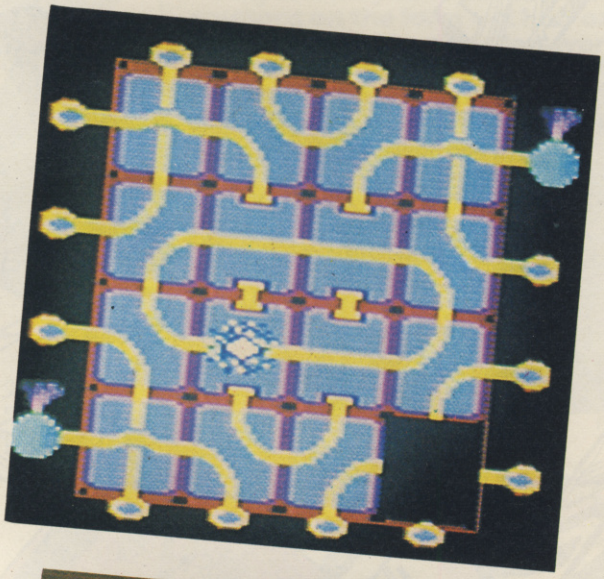
The August Gold Medal award went to the Electronic Pencil Company's *Fourth Protocol*. The very complex three-part, icon-driven adventure forced the reviewers to kickstart their grey matter and get thinking. 'I am still excited by the *Fourth Protocol* even after long evenings of play' revealed Paul, while Julian got straight to the point: 'the best thing to say about this game is BUY IT!' Gary's huge comment wound up with 'the *Fourth Protocol* is quite simply an amazingly good, involved game that is worth every penny, you MUST pay for it.'

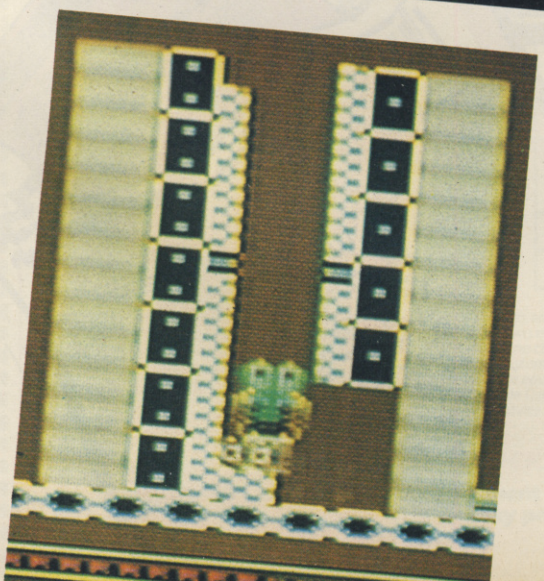
*A classic game with an amazing amount of depth. The EPC did a superlative job in turning Frederick Forsythe's book into a computer game and it fully deserved its GM award.*
**JR**

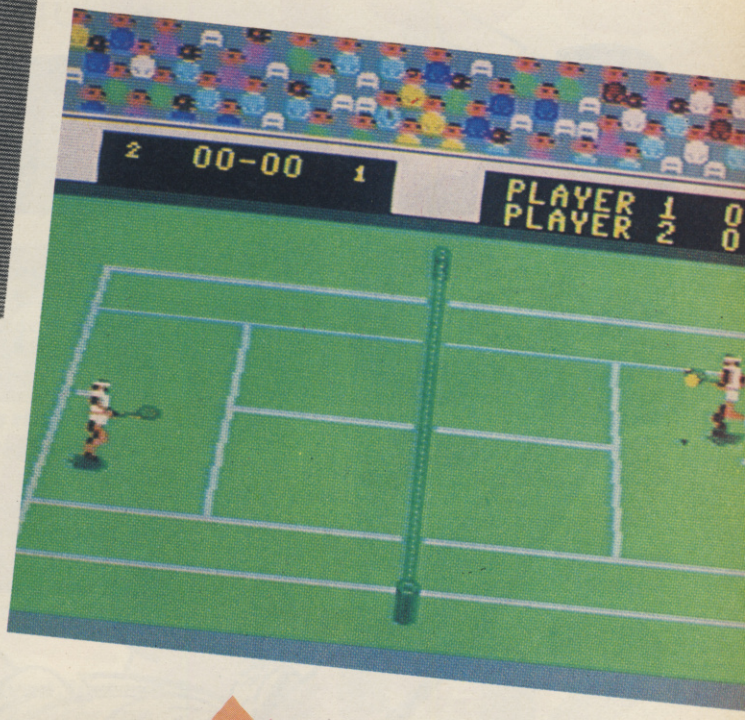
The loading music really moved me at the time and I reckon that the title screen is one of the most atmospheric ever devised. The game itself was also highly atmospheric, and very absorbing, although I never did finish the first section!
**GP**

(Jaz) I think that presentation should have been a little higher, otherwise the rest of the ratings are fine as they are.

(Gaz) Value for money up to mid nineties and overall around 97%








## INTERNATIONAL TENNIS
**Commodore**

Commodore's one or two player tennis simulation is unusual in the respect that the court is displayed horizontally, rather than vertically like most tennis games. 'I thoroughly enjoyed myself while playing it and at Commodore's low price it's a steal' raved Rignall. Paul was moved enough to say that 'Commodore have done themselves proud with this highly original and superbly presented tennis game', and Mr Penn came up with the enthusiastic pun 'Game, set and match to Commodore'.

*This is an original tennis simulation with a great control method, and I still think it's the best a year later.*
**JR**

It took a while to get used to the unusual viewpoint, but otherwise *International Tennis* was addictive and playable from the outset. Definitely the best tennis simulation on the market.
**GP**

(Jaz) I'm perfectly happy with the ratings.

(Gaz) Yes, I agree — the ratings are fine.

## THING ON A SPRING
**Gremlin Graphics**

This unusual platform game hooked the reviewers from the word 'go'. Apart from having excellent graphics, *Thing* also features one of Rob Hubbard's first, and arguably one of his best, musical compositions to date. In fact, Gary went so far as to say '*Thing* has so many good things going for it that I find it impossible to fault it in any way.' Julian, however, chose to sum up *Thing* by saying that 'the game strikes a happy medium between being easy to get into and difficult to solve.'

*I really enjoyed playing this when it first came out, and I distinctly remember going nutty when I heard the music — it's still good now, but when we first heard it, it was something else!*
**JR**

The only thing wrong with *Thing on a Spring* is that it's too hard. The initial addiction turned to severe frustration a few weeks later, and I haven't been back to it since. Still, it did prove enjoyable enough at the time to be worthwhile.
**GP**

(Jaz) The presentation mark should go up a wee bit, and the value for money and overall ratings down by two percent each. The rest of the ratings are fine; it's a great game.

(Gaz) Lastability down to mid eighties, and value for money and overall down to high eighties.

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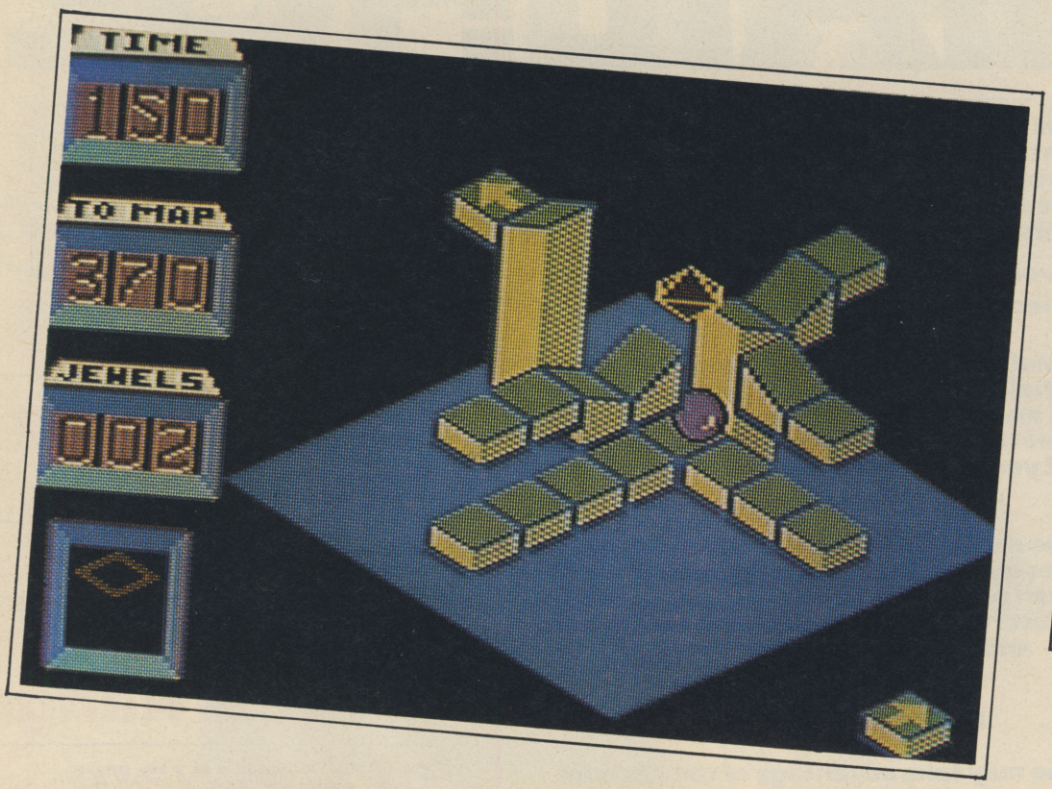


JUNE

# SPINDIZZY

**Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, Joystick or keys**

As we all know, working for the corporation is a hard life indeed and the mission you're to be sent on this time is far from the usual run of the mill stuff. The back room boys have discovered a new dimension that contains a world hung in space. Of course they want it mapped and as Trainee Assistant Cartographer for Unknown Worlds, the job's been passed onto you. The company's motivations are far from noble and it's all government sponsored work — time is money. The more time you spend out there the more money the company can claim.

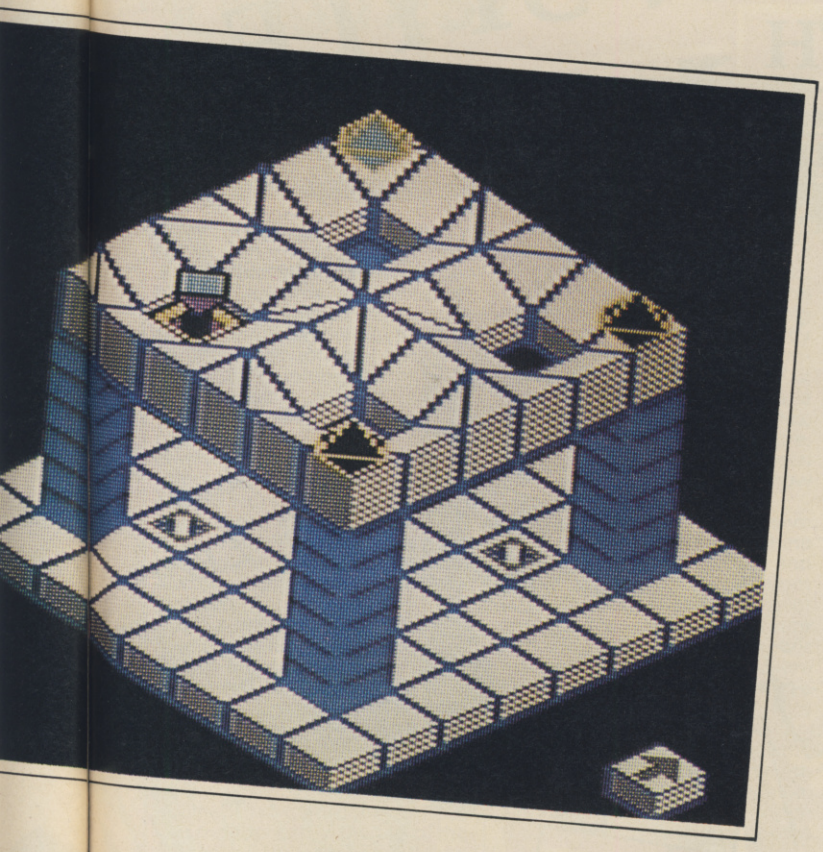
Unfortunately, the energy powering the scout craft isn't covered by the government grant, so the amount of energy you are supplied with is very meagre indeed. Not to worry though, they say that in a few of the more recently discovered dimensions there's plenty of energy to be collected. It would be wise to take advantage of such power sources, as it looks good when you're going for promotion.

The craft you are given is none too impressive, it's one of those old fashioned centrifugal drive inverted pyramids and happens to be called GERALD (Gyroscopic, Evironmental Reconnaissance And Land-Mapping Device). So there you have it, do a good job and the rewards will be far from sparse. Otherwise . . . Well, you don't want to be Trainee Assistant Cartographer all your life, do you?

As the astute reader may well have surmised by now, *Spindizzy* places you on an unknown world just aching to be mapped. Not an easy task considering there are 429 different sections to be explored and recorded. GERALD is an intelligent beast, equipped with the latest in scenery interpretation software. You view the outside world through a scanner and the immediate area is represented as a forced 3D perspective view. There's a bit of an anomaly here in that you can actually see your own craft even though you are sat inside it. Still, with practise it is quite easy to adjust to this strange point of view. However, if the viewpoint occasionally proves awkward, for example, when GERALD is behind a pillar and is proving troublesome to control, then the angle of view can be altered with a mere keypress.

Your scanner tends to simplify the outside world quite a bit and it all looks very angular. The computer enhances all back-

*Another fabulous arcade game hits the 64, but this one is the best of the lot. It's very challenging and can get incredibly frustrating when you run out of time just as you're about to enter some unexplored territory, but due to the game's immense addictive qualities you just have to keep going back for more. The graphics are really amazing and some of the constructions are very deviously thought out and are very difficult to negotiate safely. Go and buy* Spindizzy *now, I can't recommend it highly enough.*



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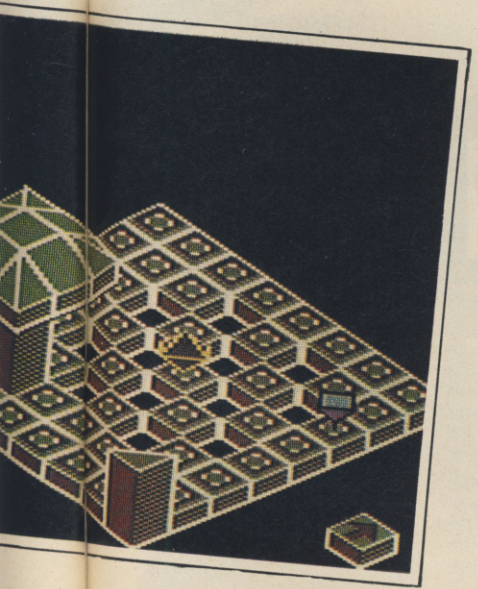

grounds with a grid pattern overlay to help the viewer recognise the 3D shapes on a 2D screen. At first glance the view seems quite familiar, bearing a resemblance to the arcade game *Marble Madness*.

One of GERALD's major design faults is his inability to cope with some of the steep slopes. This is due to his inferior drive unit, but a good run up can usually accumulate the speed and momentum required to negotiate some of the hills. The joystick is used to move GERALD in any of the eight available directions and the fire button gives an extra burst of energy and speed when pressed. The main problem with control though, is the constant battle against force and momentum.

Since the new world is hung in the infinity of space, falling off it is not sensible. However, this is not as terminal as it may seem — GERALD can beam himself back to the last location visited, but to do this he needs to tap into his power supply and this results in a loss of energy. If GERALD goes off a particularly steep incline too fast, he is thrown high into the air and he lands with a bump hefty enough to split him into four component parts. Tapping into his energy reserves he's able to reassemble once more, but the energy counter is depleted accordingly. Life isn't all bad though, as there are more than a few locations containing strange pulsating power crystals which replenish your energy when collected. Another counter keeps track of the jewels picked up and it is quite an accurate indication of your progress, since the planet can only be successfully mapped if all the energy jewels are collected.

The alien world contains evidence of previous inhabitants of a very advanced level. Though they no longer reside here, their buildings and constructions still exist. Even though they are very ancient, quite a few of the mechanisms still operate. In fact using the lift system is essential if you are to achieve any sort of worthwhile progress. The lift platforms come in a variety of shapes and sizes and most of them are prettily patterned. Painted on the floors of several locations are representations of the lift platforms. When entering the world all lifts are passive, but moving over a lift icon activates the respective platform. The trouble is that only two types of lift can be activated at any one time and it is for this reason that the patterns of any activated platforms are displayed on the bottom left hand side of your scanner.

Of course, the idea of the game is to map the planet, so your scanner also carries information showing how many rooms are left to be mapped. If this isn't enough, a mere touch of the **M** key draws up a map of the planet and any locations visited are duly highlighted. Pressing any other key returns you to the game.

Your exploration exploits come to an end when your energy runs out. The bitter fruits of defeat do have their sweet spots though, and in *Spindizzy* it's a detailed debriefing of your progress from GERALD. Still, you can always try again — no-one wants to stay Junior Assistant Cartographer forever! Do they?

Spindizzy *is excellent — not the sort of game that makes me want to stick my fingers down my throat. Any resemblances between* Spindizzy *and any arcade games, living or dead or called* Marble Madness, *is purely coincidental. It may look a bit like* Marble Madness, *but the gameplay is totally different and very neat it is too. The scenario is amusing and one of the best I've seen to date. Full marks to Electric Dreams there. The 3D graphics are excellent in both appearance and execution — such a system hasn't been seen on the 64 before. The game plays very fast indeed and offers better than average challenge even for the most aggressive of joystick mashers. Be a man (unless, of course, you're a girly), buy* Spindizzy *today.*

Spindizzy *is destined to be a classic. It's beautifully thought out and highly absorbing to play. Although there are hundreds of screens, they are all varied and most of them are very tough to negotiate. They're also superbly drawn. The perspective works well and being able to change the viewpoint is a great touch.* Spindizzy *is by no means easy and will take ages to solve, but it is addictive and frustrating enough to make you want to keep at it. Wonderful stuff and worthy of anybody's time and money.*

**Presentation 99%**
Very good indeed. Lots of options and 'nice' touches throughout, such as being able to change the viewpoint, and the game is attractively and sensibly presented on screen.

**Graphics 96%**
Very impressive flip-screen 3D graphics.

**Sound 44%**
The sound effects are very sparse, but what is there works well.

**Hookability 97%**
A joy to get into and incredibly addictive to play.

**Lastability 98%**
Exploring and mapping the hundreds of different screens is compulsive stuff.

**Value for Money 97%**
A helluva lot of game for your money.

**Overall 98%**
Don't be 'Arry 'n' Billy all your life, take a day off, be a GERALD, buy *Spindizzy*.

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'HALLEY'S THINGIE'

# THE COMET

**Firebird, £7.95 cass, Joystick only**

Aggggh! Gosh, somebody better help us — a horrible steaming comet is hurtling towards our beautiful bluey-green planet at a large rate of knots, and clinging to its knobbly exterior are a whole bunch of revolting germs. No, not Gerry the popular beatnik folk hero, these ones are far more evil and if the comet crashes into our planet they'll infect everyone and certain people will be jolly peeved that they closed down half the National Health system because everyone's going to need a doctor if this comet can't be stopped.

So, a hero has to be found to fly a spaceship and intercept the comet before it reaches Earth. That hero, dear reader, is you. Needless to say you have to face all sorts of heart-stopping dangers, five different ones to be precise, before you reach your goal.

When the game commences five monitors sit at the top of the screen, and four more lurk along the bottom (but the ones at the base of the screen are irrelevant to the game). Normally the middle of the screen displays a view from the window in the side of the space ship, but when one of the monitors at the top of the screen flashes, signifying that there is an ongoing emergency situation, a scrolling message appears at the bottom of the screen informing you what is going on and the screen changes to show the relevant emergency game.

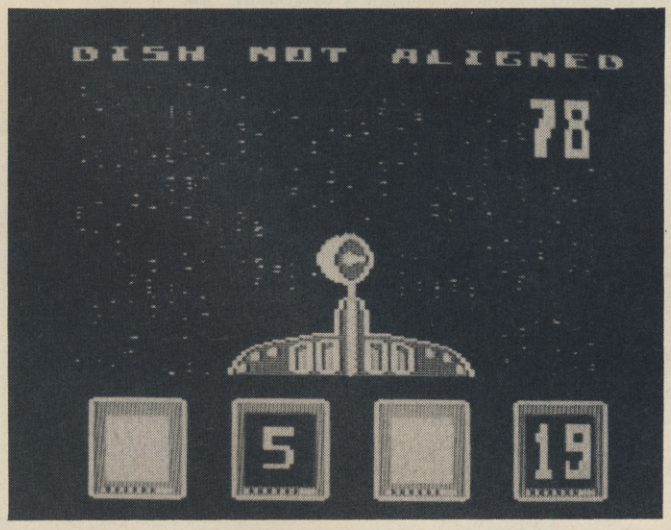
There are five of these sub-games and they all have to be survived to ensure that you reach the comet. The first is a situation where the antenna dish on the top of the spacecraft gets out of alignment and has to be realigned. Moving the joystick left and right turns the antenna and a signal sounds. When it's at its highest pitch the dish is correctly aligned. The big problem is that a timer swiftly counts down as you're performing the manoeuvre and if it reaches zero before the dish is aligned the game terminates, the mercy mission is a failure, and just to rub it in the screen fills with bananas to show you've *slipped up*. Ha!

The second is el massivo problemo — the coffee machine has gone horribly wrong and you're just about to die from lackofcoffeeitis! Well, if the pilot gets to the planet, the more caffeine in his system, the better his reactions . . . Nine icons are displayed on-screen and using a cursor and the joystick fire button you must switch the correct one off and on so that the right amount of ingredients are put into the coffee machine. Another emergency arises when the life support system breaks down, and naturally if the situation isn't quickly rectified you'll die of suffocation and get the banana treatment. Getting the life support system fixed involves shooting balls with a cursor. It sounds strange, but apparently these balls are messing up the air duct by bouncing around at high speed. Once again, there's a time limit to complete this sub-game, or it's banana time.

Next the computer breaks down. The problem is that four of its external LED's have turned renegade and are not conforming to normal standards, ie: some are switched on when they shouldn't be and vice-versa. The four little lights are shown on the right hand side of the screen and many wires trail from them. To make things all correct and ticketty boo again, you have to switch them on or off to restore the correct pattern on the display. This is done by moving a cursor up and down the wires and lighting/dousing the LEDs by switching the current on or off with the fire button.

The final emergency is just like *Missile Command* — the onboard computer suddenly discovers that there are a whole pack of missiles homing in towards the spaceship. Luckily, though, you've got a cursor and an unlimited supply of ABMs to fend off the incoming threat. When you've destroyed enough missiles the ship is declared safe and the mission can continue.

Once you've survived twenty emergencies (they happen randomly) you reach the comet and are finally get a crack at averting the biggest threat to the human race since F111's flew over Libya. Flying low over the comet you must destroy the gruesome looking Germ Bags which sit on the surface. Decontaminate the comet and it's back to earth as a hero . . .



*'A daring action packed space adventure with all the risks' says the advert. 'Thrills and death defying challenges' it continues. The only death defying challenge is whether you'll die of terminal boredom or not. The game is really awful with five boring tasks to complete time and time again to ensure you reach the comet (which has now gone of course). The games are all dull and include a feeble* Missile Command *attempt, a listening test and a game which involves pressing the fire button twice. The other two aren't as bad but are still really crummy. The graphics aren't much cop and the sound is very dull indeed. Don't do what Giotto did — steer well clear of The Comet.*

Actually, I don't think The Comet *is that bad, but that's not to say I think it's good. I've certainly seen and played worse — usually at a lower price — but this is quite fun to play for a short while. Everything about* The Comet *is average, or below average — the graphics are reasonable in their definition (the colour scheme is a bit bland, though) and the sound is nothing special (the FX are rather weak). The game itself is simple and enjoyable initially, but my interest waned after about half an hour as it proves boring and reptetive to play due to a lack of variety and interesting things to do. Maybe if* The Comet *was considerably cheaper then I would consider it a possible purchase, but at the price I wouldn't bother with it.*

**Presentation 80%**
No game options, but the game has a well though out screen layout.

**Graphics 56%**
The parallax of the stars flying past is nice, but everything else is pretty dull.

**Sound 20%**
It's at times like this when you really appreciate the volume switch.

**Hookability 52%**
All the sub-games are very simple and getting into the game itself is a doddle.

**Lastability 38%**
The simplicity and repetitive nature of the games soon makes it pall.

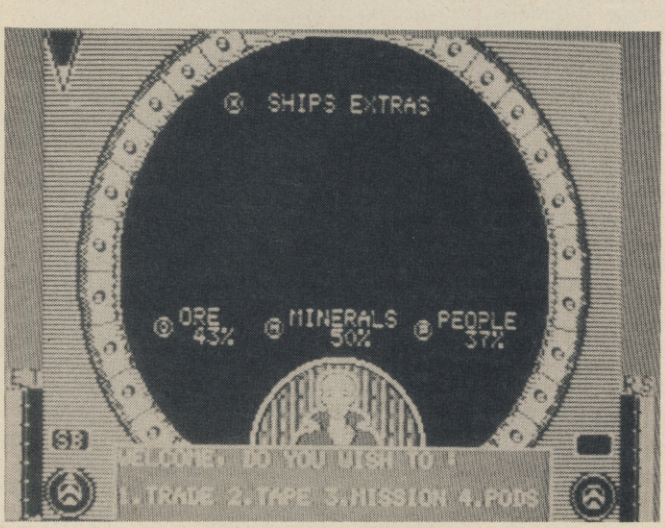
**Value For Money 33%**
Overpriced for such a damp squib.

**Overall 38%**
Hot range? More like tepid . . . .

"WAIT ANOTHER 75 YEARS..."

# EMPIRE

**Firebird, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys**




*Empire* is a game that takes place in the past's future. Huh? Well, like the original Flash Gordon, *Empire* is set in the far future, but it's how the people of the thirties thought it would be. The object of the game is to build an Empire spanning many solar systems by trading with starbases, destroying loads of marauding pirates and braving many hazardous missions. Only then can you start building a huge Frontier Shield to protect your Empire for the rest of eternity. All this takes place in a Galaxy consisting of a hundred solar systems.

Your spaceship is shown in the centre of the screen, the background, and anything on it, scrolls and spins by thrusting and turning respectively. Along the bottom of the screen there are several gauges and indicators. Four of them are vertical water gauges showing the ship's energy level, shield status, radiation level and temperature. At the beginning of a game the energy and shield levels are at maximum, but they soon deplete as the ship collides with alien gunfire, planets or similar 'debris'. Run out of energy and shields completely and it's time to give up empire-building . . . the game ends.

The temperature gauge rises as energy is expended in zooming about and the weapon systems produce heat too. Care has to be taken to ensure that the ship doesn't get too hot — if the temperature rises too high the ship explodes. Incoming messages are displayed on the console, and a stardate counter keeps track of gametime for you in ten second units. Two direction finders aid navigation — the one on the left constantly points towards the starbase while the right hand one is used for plotting courses. By selecting a map of the solar system, moving a cursor to where you want to go and pressing the **1** key, the right hand direction finder comes into action and you whizz straight across the local system without banging into any planets. Galactic travel is effected in a similar manner, but the ship must have the appropriate hyperspace add-on before long distance travelling becomes viable.

Trade is effected by bartering pods, small circular containers used to transport cargo around the galaxy. These are picked up by extending tow ropes from the ship and running over them. Pods contain all sorts of useful things, such as people and radioactive material. Unfortunately, radioactive substances contaminate your ship and eventually kill you, so it's advisable to get rid of the radiation emitting pods as quickly as possible.

Pods can only be traded at starbases. When a pod is dropped outside a base, a rope extends, picks it up and drags it in to the base's inner core. After relinquishing a pod, the starbase allows your craft to dock and the trading can begin if you possess a trade pass — this is given when on completion of the first mission. A bald-headed female appears at the bottom of the screen once the ship has docked, and three pod symbols, representing the starbase's ore, mineral and people resources, are displayed along with a percentage which shows the base's stock levels. You are then given four options: TRADE, SAVE GAME, MISSION and PODS. The TRADE option allows you to get extra pods, providing they're available, and they can be collected from outside the base when you leave. The starbase needs resources to produce new equipment for your ship, and if the base is kept well stocked, useful items flow in your direction allowing your craft to be upgraded. Successful pilots can eventually get a Wolf ship capable of carrying up to ten pods at a time.

Selecting the MISSION option after docking results in a message being printed at the bottom of the screen informing you of the next task in line. The first mission asks you to rescue a princess who has been kidnapped and carried away by some evil aliens. The PODS option allows extra equipment pods to be collected — if there are any available.

The Pods needed to keep a starbase well stocked are obtained by flying down to the surface of a planet and searching around. Calling up the System Map and using the cursor to select a planet allows you to go planetside — the computer does the rest. Before landing a **warp hole**, represented by a flashing box has to be found. Flying into a warp hole changes the view into a 3D 'tunnel' formed by wire frame squares that whizz towards you and have to be flown through. Banging into a square or missing one completely drains energy.

Landing on the planet present a 3D view of the surface, which initially consists of nothing but trees. Moving along at a constant speed, your ship can be steered left and right to avoid obstacles. The accuracy of your flying during the warp hole sequence affects how far into the forest you land. Aerial mines have to be avoided or shot after the forest sequence has been cleared, and it is in this phase of the game that pods can be collected. The left hand direction finder indicates whether there are any pods in the vicinity, showing where they are in relation to your ship by means of a triangular pointer. Fly over a pod — in this case represented by a pyramid — and it is automatically gathered into the ship's hold.

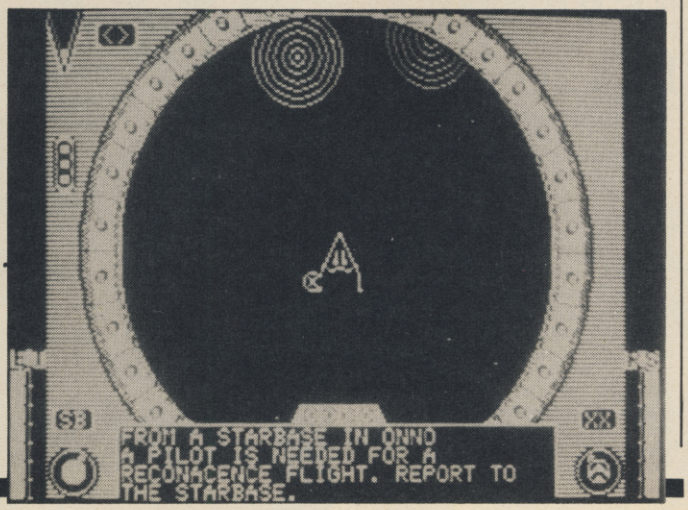
A pyramidal exit point is the route offworld — it transports you back to the warp hole.

Travelling between the different systems involves negotiating an asteroid belt — this is unavoidable unless you have a hyperspace pod. Each of the hundred different systems is

Empire *is unofficially hailed as* Elite II, *but I found it a bit disappointing.*

*Even looking further than the flickery and slow vector graphics and after having a bit of a squint at the game,* Empire *proves to be more than a trifle dull. It's probably my fault more than the game's, since this type of thing doesn't really appeal to me anyway. Although I'm sure that the game itself will appeal to a great many people, the sound effects won't — awful is a word I would use if it didn't seem so merciful, as a quick dive across the table to the volume knob is needed after about ten minutes of play. Still, if space trading is your niche in life, check out* Empire — *otherwise don't bother.*

*At first glance this looks like Asteroids* with extra bits, but once you start playing it becomes obvious that there's quite a lot of game to be played. It's very nicely thought out with some fine touches but the graphics are sometimes a bit flickery and the spaceship is sluggish to control. The worst aspect about the game is the sound — it's really grotty and grates on the eardrums. If you like these sort of *Elite* type trading games and love spending ages playing them then you'll probably enjoy this, but if you like more action try something else.



surrounded by an asteroid belt crammed with square rocks that have to be avoided — energy is lost each time your ship bumps into one. To add to the problems, some systems have been overrun by very fast alien ships. Starbases in alien-controlled systems are not very useful. However, if you manage to eradicate the alien terror, the Empire is able to reclaim the system and the rewards are well worth collecting. A couple of systems have been infected with the plague, and should you venture into one you become contaminated, carrying the disease wherever you go and becoming unpopular. There is an antidote pod, but it has to be found . . .

As you delve deeper into the game it changes and presents you with more aliens, different equipment and new ships and starbases. After visiting all of the one hundred systems, you're in a position to start buying the starbases and constructing a Frontier Shield. This is built by taking eight Frontier Generators to their destination systems. Activate the eight when they're correctly located and the galaxy becomes yours for ever and ever

**Presentation 82%**
Informative instructions and pleasant title screen.

**Graphics 79%**
The vector graphics are pretty good, but flickery, and the 3D planet bit is nothing special.

**Sound 32%**
The 'tunes' are poor, but at least they can be turned off.

**Hookability 64%**
Due to the slowness and seemingly complex nature of the gameplay it's very difficult to get into.

**Lastability 79%**
There's a lot there if you're prepared to persevere.

**Value For Money 74%**
Rather overpriced for what it is.

**Overall 76%**
May appeal to those into this sort of thing, but don't expect too much.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# BOUNCES

**Beyond, £9.95 cass, joystick only**

After much debate, deliberation, change of owner, employer and management, Beyond has finally decided to release the now fabled *Bounces*. Written by Denton Designs, *Bounces* is a futuristic entertainment used as an opiate for the masses. It's a sensible and noble sport which involves being connected to a wall by a huge rubber band whilst wearing friction soled shoes in a special arena.

Within the *Bounces* arena a slugdomium ball moves around in a very low gravity way, and it is the way it moves, or rather the how and where of its movement, that decides the outcome of the game. If it flies into your goal then pointwise you're worse off for the experience. Conversely, a ball in your opponent's goalmouth is just the sort of thing that wins points. Of course the path that the ball takes can be changed and manipulated by the player, and through clever slugdomium slug control, goals are scored.

As well as using the great big laccy band and friction shoes both players are equipped with a snatcher. Attached to the players game hand, it serves two purposes: used as a scoop it can snatch up the flying sphere and throw it out at high velocity (the subtle use); less subtly, the snatcher can be used as a weapon — just raise it above your opponent's head and bring it sharply down onto his cranium. This tends to befuddle the wits of your opponent, causing him to fall over — another point winning activity.

The arena is viewed side-on and the play area occupies the middle part of the screen. Two sets of three different goals are in the ceiling, one set above each competitor. For the computer version of the game two real life heroes have been digitised from the future arena: Erik the Red and Sir Ashley Trueblood. Both are easily distinguished as a very large part of this future sport is showmanship. Erik is in full Viking attire while Sir Ashley is decked out in a complete 14th century knight's suit of armour.

*There's only one real objection I've got to* Bounces *and that's its price tag. Although it's a very neat game, £9.95 is too much to ask. The game is good and despite the simple appearance, a lot of thought has gone into the design. The one player game is OK, but the two player game is excellent — it really is quite funny. The graphics are alright and so is the music, although it is very Dentonesque and there are similarities to other Denton soundtracks — the* Bounces *tune sounds like a faster version of the* Shadowfire *theme. Overall, a good release which is unfortunately overpriced, but definitely worth a look.*

A joystick is used to control your player and a number of moves are available during the contest. On a fundamental left, right basis the stick can move a hero left and right, although the elasticity of the stretchy band that tethers him to the wall limits the field of movement. Stretching the band too far by walking away from the wall can cause problems when retreating as the tension in the rubber can make your hero slide back at an alarming rate. Bash into the wall and he'll lay on the floor in a huddled heap, and points are lost.

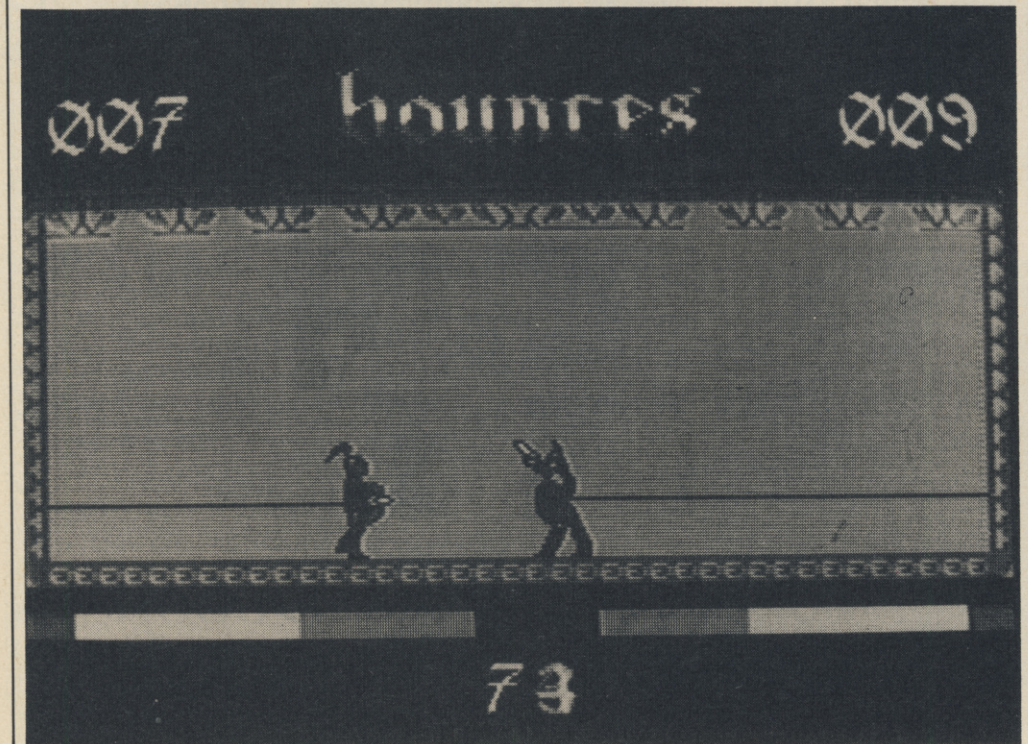
Pressing the fire button brings a player's snatcher arm into action, and as long as fire is held down the snatcher is under joystick control. If the ball passes over the snatcher while fire is being held, it is captured. Releasing the fire button while a ball is held in the snatcher releases the energy-ridden sphere back into the arena.

Bouncing a ball off an opponent's skull is not an illegal move but a low down trick; nevertheless it's a very handy tactic indeed as it knocks the poor chap to the ground. Falling to the ground has two results: 1) it gives points to your rival and 2) it saps your stamina. Stamina is shown on a bar underneath the arena itself and the bar grows if a player stands around resting. Troll about, get knocked over and lob a few balls about and your player's stamina quickly gets into overload. Paralysis sets in while a player's stamina bar is in the red and his opponent is presented with a handy opportunity to score points until the bar creeps back to the yellow and movement is restored to the tired player's limbs.

Different point values are awarded for plonking the ball in the different goals, and bonuses are awarded for bashings that you inflict on the other player. There are two halves to each match, each half lasting 90 seconds. The winner is, logically, the one with most points at the end of the bout.

Bounces *is one of those games that is very simple, but great fun to play. Although the screen display only consists of two sprites and little else, the graphics are of a high standard — both characters are well drawn and they move convincingly.* Bounces *plays very well, especially with a second human player, and it is a game that I can wholeheartedly recommend buying, even though it seems a little expensive for what it is.*

*At first* Bounces *looks pretty crummy, but once you get into it you soon realise that although it's a simple game, it's great fun to play. The game really comes into its own when played with another human player — it's a real laugh when you start bashing and firing the ball at each other. For what it offers it's a bit pricey, but that doesn't mean it's not worth buying as it is very enjoyable to play.*




**Presentation 88%**
Sensible screen lay out and lots of useful options.

**Graphics 80%**
Great sprites and character set, but that's all there is.

**Sound 78%**
A pleasant remix of *Shadowfire*.

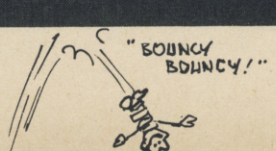
**Hookability 92%**
Instantly playable and great fun.

**Lastability 85%**
The two player mode offers the most challenge, but the one player option is still quite tough.

**Value For Money 79%**
Seems overpriced for what it is . . .

**Overall 86%**
. . . but it's still a pretty good game.





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# FAIRLIGHT

**The Edge, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, Joystick with keys**

Once upon a time in these lands . . . ' Isvar turned away from the storyteller and knocked back the remainder of his pint. He'd heard the story so many times, about how the Land of Fairlight had changed from a happy place to one of desolation and misery. All that was 3,000 years ago when King Avars held his court in the Castle of Avars on the Plains of Avarslund. The storytellers claimed that then was a time of light and magic, but who really cares? Today is a time of Feudalism, with the frightened peoples of these fragmented lands ruled by a group of ruthless Barons and Merchants.

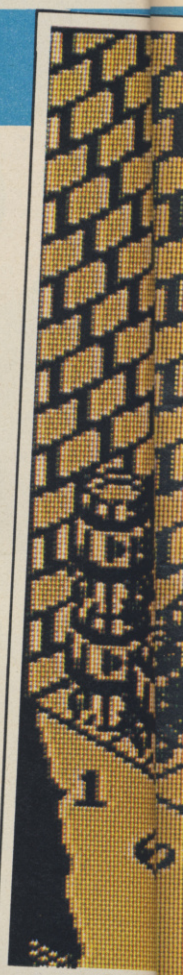
Bored, Isvar left the Tavern and strolled across the fields. Although it was July the sky was grey and the clouds had that strange tint that always heralded snow. In the distance was a dark band which caught his eye, the edge of Ogri's Wood. The sight of this caused Isvar to ponder, 'The Elders claim that there are poisonous snakes in that wood and that it is an evil place' he said to himself. But he knew that there were no snakes at this latitude and anyway, the cold would have killed them off if there were any so why had he been told never to enter? With his thoughts racing he leapt across a muddy brook across the fields towards the forbidden forest.

After pushing his way through the bramble barbs he found a clear forest track and confidently strode along it. The woods bordering the path were thick and dark and it was becoming increasingly difficult to see anything when Isvar suddenly heard the sound of undergrowth being trampled. A wave of cold fear swept over him and he hastened along the path, looking over his shoulder. There was nothing to be seen so he took a deep breath and turned — and there stood a huge woman-like creature. As he gazed at her he found himself becoming transfixed, his body numb and his eyelids heavy . . .

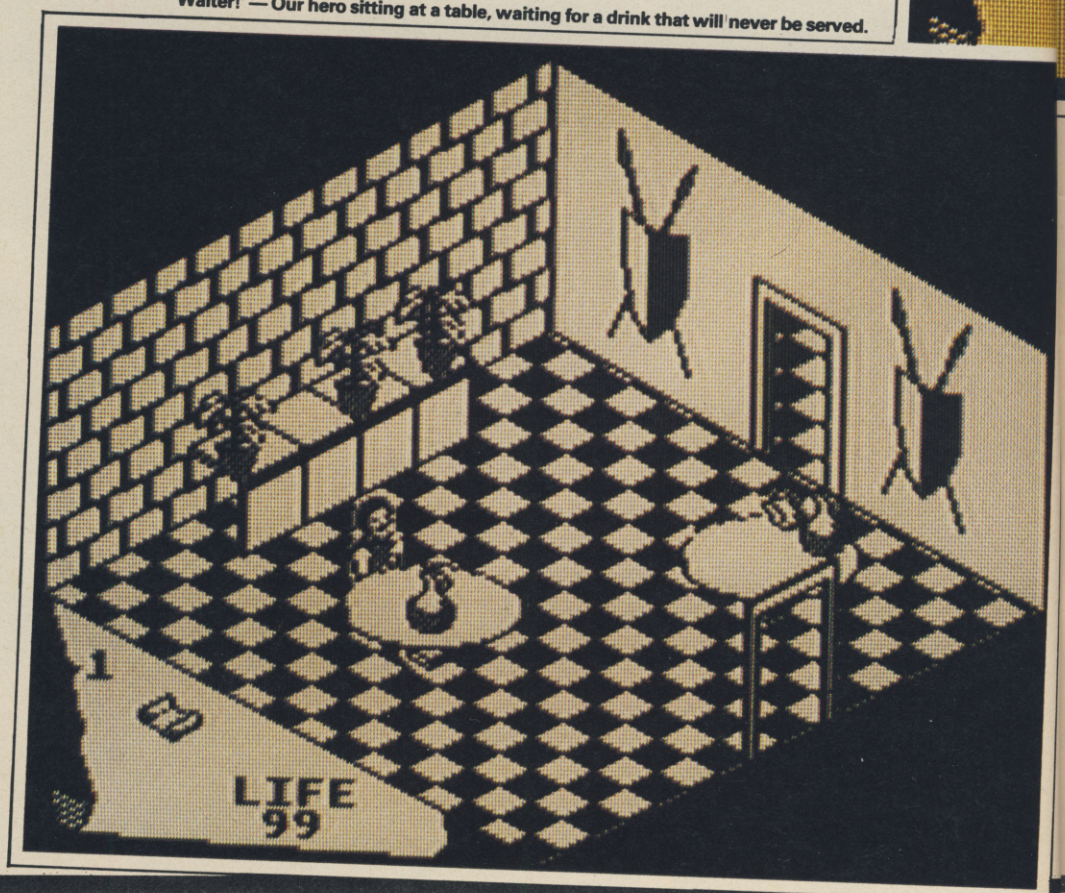
Isvar awoke what seemed like an eternity later and shivered. The typically cold and damp Fairlight day had given him aching limbs and he shivered. A slight noise caused him to look round and there, in the entrance to the cave, stood a hooded figure. Before he could react in any way it spoke 'arise Isvar, we have much to do, and if you do not move I fear that Ogri will return and feast upon you as her breakfast'. Isvar jumped to his feet and followed the man into the glade outside. 'You have strayed, but I can lead you to safety' said the mysterious man and he turned and strode down the nearby slope. Isvar hurried after him and they both pushed through the undergrowth.

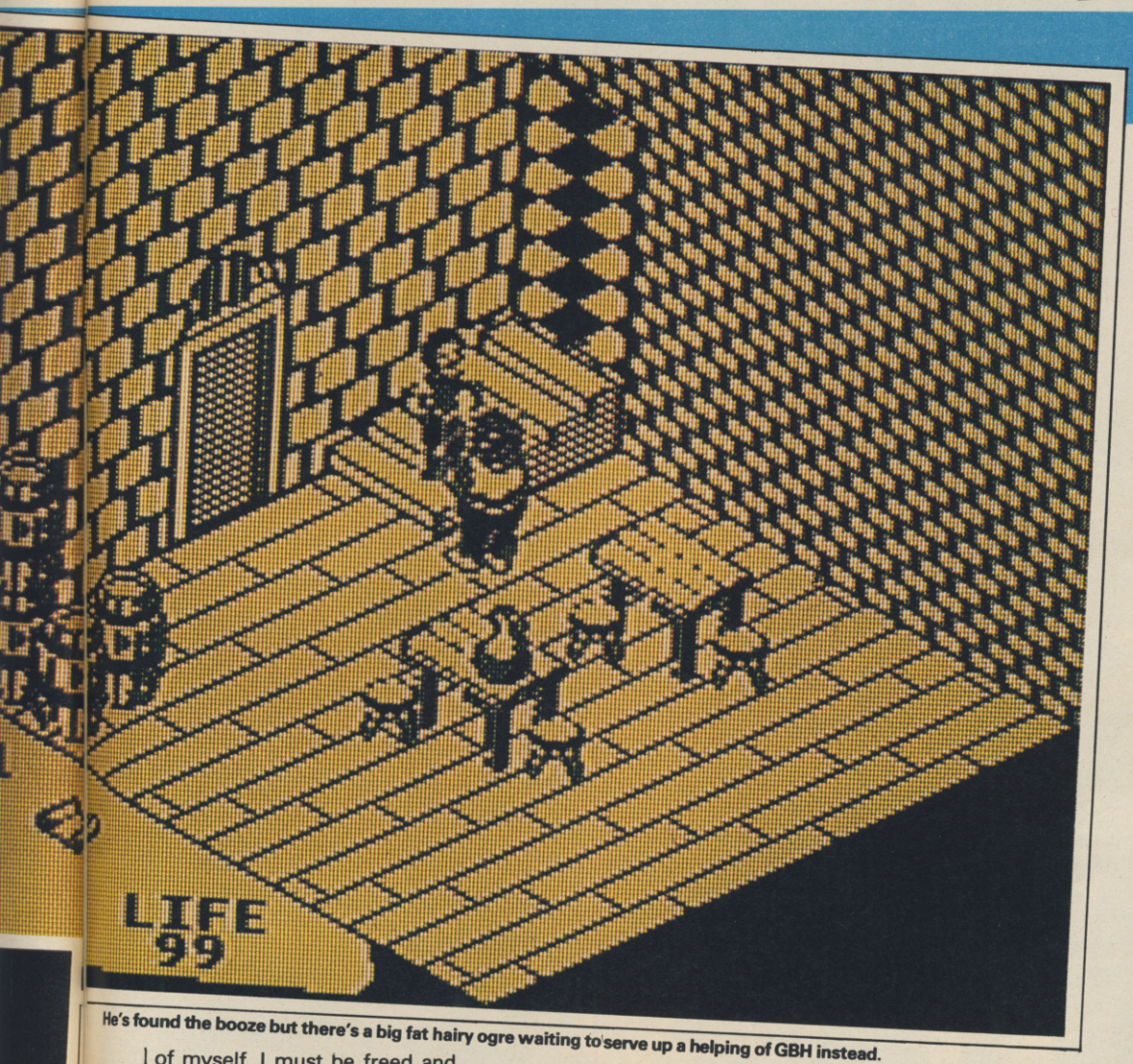
After what seemed like an age the overgrown path reached a smooth wall and the old man turned to follow it. Suddenly he turned and swiftly disappeared into an opening in the wall, beckoning Isvar to follow him. The opening led to a courtyard and Isvar looked about him and suddenly knew where he was — the Castle Avars! He turned and looked at the wall but it was seamless. He was trapped. Instantly waves of panic coursed through him, but the hooded man spoke and his voice was reassuring 'I have lured you to this castle. You see, I live here, or rather I am a prisoner here, being held by the slayer of King Avars, I was his sorcerer. What you see is just a projected image

*Fairlight is an excellent game though it does have problems. The main, and most obvious, being its severe lack of speed. However the amount of thought behind the actual game helps the player ignore the lethargy of person/game interface and you'll soon be fairly involved. 3D wise* Fairlight *works quite well though the amount of time needed to set up the screens can be a bit lengthy and you can find yourself watching a black screen for quite a bit of time. Control over the hero is nice and easy to handle including the manipulation of objects. It's all very clever and anyone with a sort of adventure bent would be well worthwhile having a go at sorting out* Fairlight.



**'Waiter!' — Our hero sitting at a table, waiting for a drink that will never be served.**






He's found the booze but there's a big fat hairy ogre waiting to serve up a helping of GBH instead.

of myself. I must be freed and the only way that can be is for you to find the Book of Light, hidden somewhere within these walls. You will see trolls, guards and many other creations which are here to destroy anybody who manages to gain entrance to this castle. Do not fail.' And with that the image of the sorcerer disappeared . . .

You play the role of the reluctant hero and you can move anywhere on screen as long as ground, stairs or other objects allow and strolling off screen causes the game to flick and show another location. The game does its best to behave just like real life and Isvar can clamber up and down steps, jump on and off objects, and so on. He can also pick up, use and drop objects. Isvar has five pockets in his garments, each of which can hold one object. Some objects have magical uses and others are for practical purposes. You'll just have to find out which object does what and why by experimenting. Bigger objects, like tables, barrels or chairs, can't be carried if Isvar has other things, but they can always be pushed along.

There are quite a few weirdoes residing in the castle and all of them deplete Isvar's life force if he touches them. This life force is displayed on screen as a counter which starts at 99 and diminishes as he gets beaten up. He can fight with his trusty sword, although not all of the nasties can be prodded to death. Luckily the hero can top up his life force by eating (using) the food and wine which can be found around the castle.

There are plenty of locations and they're all colour coded so you know where you're at. For example all the open air locations are blue, but there are also caves, tiled rooms, towers with flights of stairs — you'll just have to discover for yourselves.

*This is certainly a tricky game to get into — the instructions give no clues and it's a case of trial and error from the start. The graphics are very effective and give a convincing representation of a real world within the 64. The major niggle is the speed that the game is played — it's all ever so slow, especially when there are other things beetling about the screen, and the delay when moving from one location to another is quite long. If you don't mind the speed then this game could well appeal, but if you like fast stuff then it might cause frustration. The best thing is for you to have a look at it first and decide for yourself.*

*I found the slowness of play offputting at first, and had serious doubts about the playability of* Fairlight. *But, perseverance proved rewarding and despite the speed problems, I enjoyed playing it. In fact I still do, even though to be honest I can't get very far.* Fairlight *has an enthralling atmosphere and is highly absorbing to play. It is a very deep game which will take ages to solve, and I reckon that The Edge have got a big hit on their hands. Lousy music though.*

**Presentation 80%**
The keys are easy to use and the screen layout is quite nice.

**Graphics 89%**
The 3D is effective, although everything is rather slow especially when moving from screen to screen.

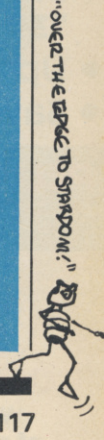
**Sound 69%**
Sounds rather like a remix of the *Wizardry* music, but not as good.

**Hookability 88%**
It's initially difficult (and slow!) to get into, but once you start solving problems it becomes compulsive.

**Lastability 92%**
Plenty of problems to solve, and locations galore to explore.

**Value For Money 87%**
A lot of game for your money.

**Overall 90%**
A jolly good arcade adventure which gets the grey matter clanking into action.



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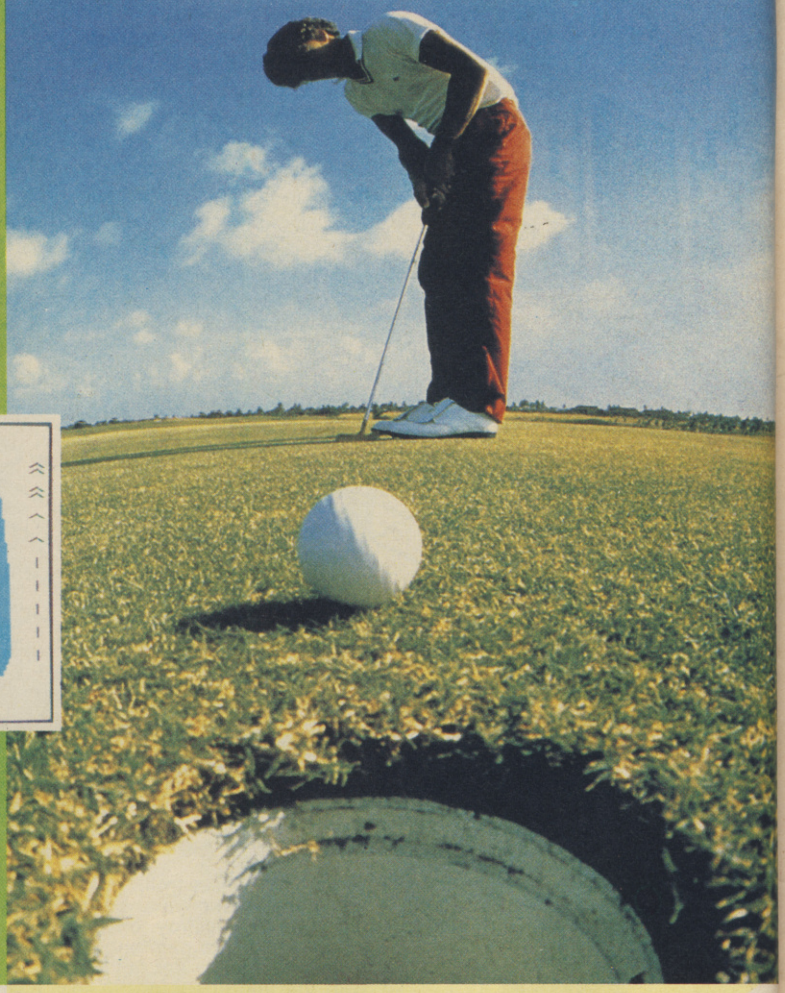

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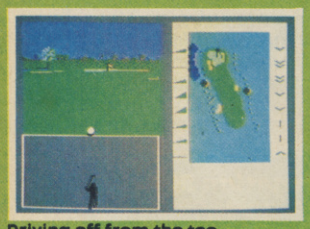
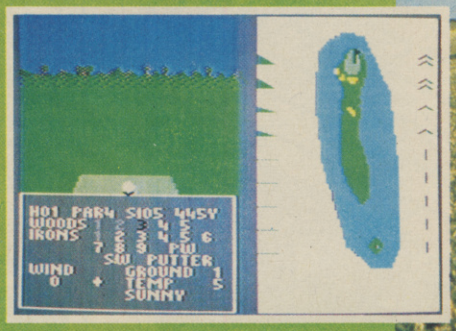
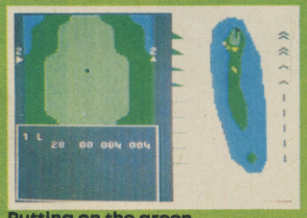


Driving off from the tee.



Approaching the green.



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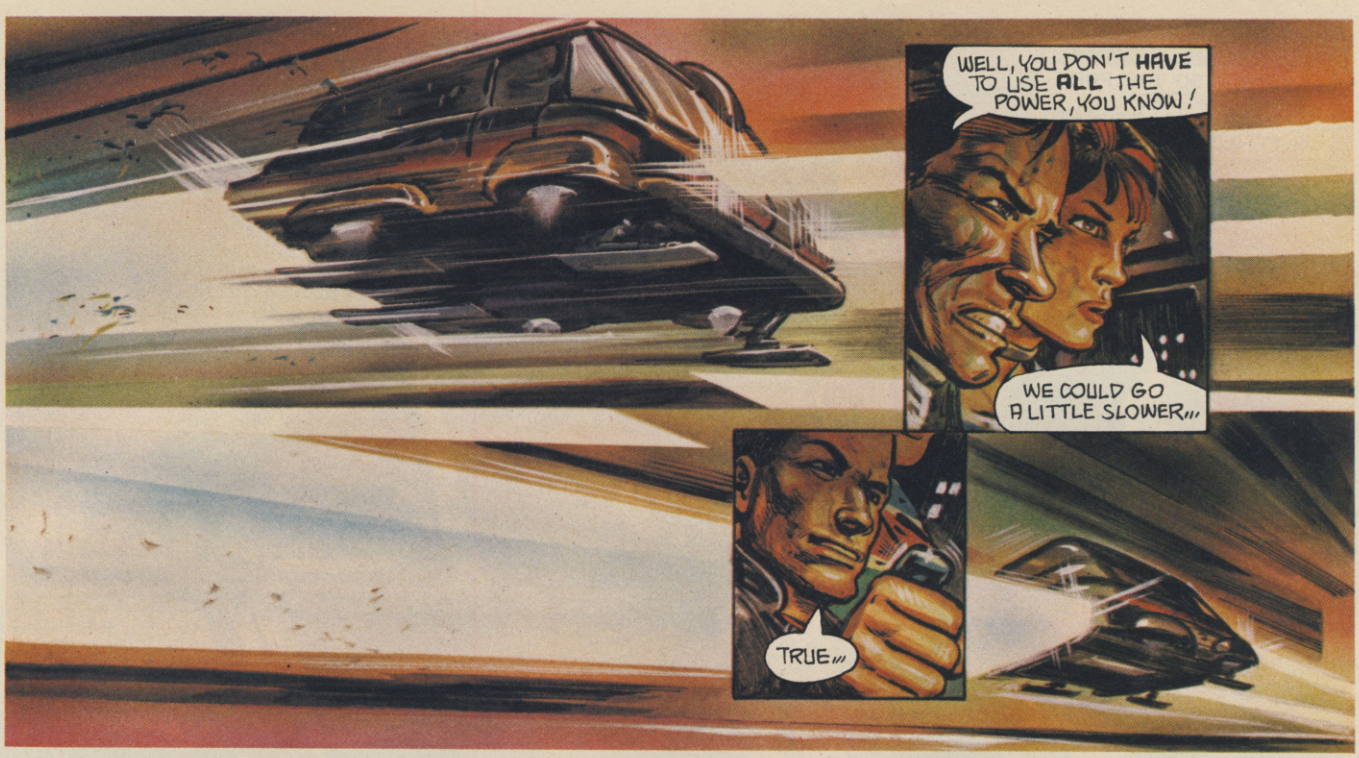
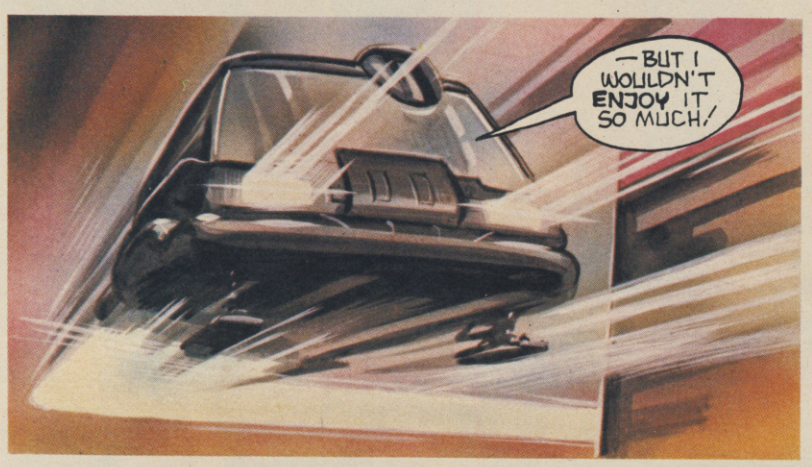
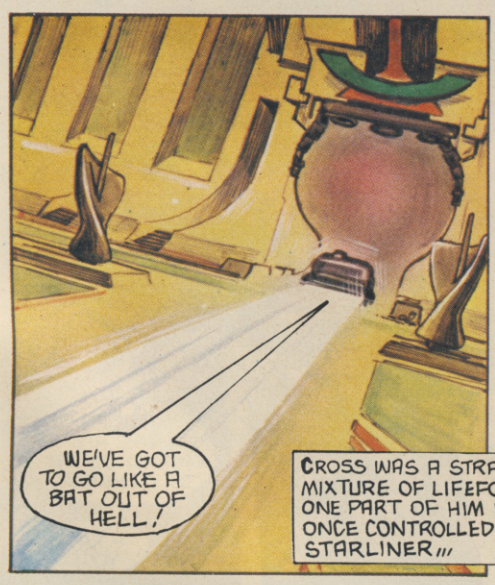
# THE TERMINAL MAN

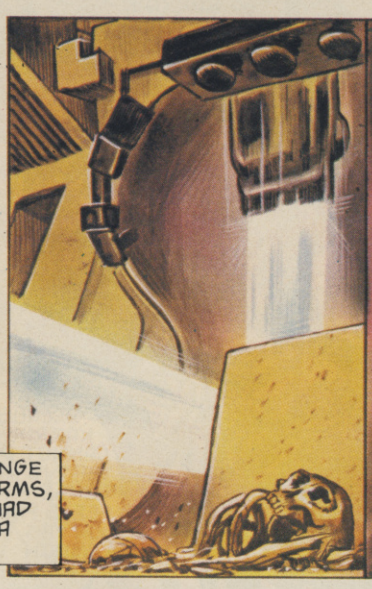
STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©


WELL, YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE ALL THE POWER, YOU KNOW!
WE COULD GO A LITTLE SLOWER...
TRUE...


—BUT I WOULDN'T ENJOY IT SO MUCH!

BESIDES—THE ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY OF THE ENTRY VORTEX IS VERY STRONG, WE NEED TO PUT ALL OUR POWER RESERVES INTO KINETIC ENERGY TO RUN AGAINST IT!
WHAT...?


WE'VE GOT TO GO LIKE A BAT OUT OF HELL!


CROSS WAS A STRANGE MIXTURE OF LIFEFORMS, ONE PART OF HIM HAD ONCE CONTROLLED A STARLINER...

IT WAS THAT PART WHICH URGED THE SHUTTLE THROUGH THE DEADLY BEND IN THE ENTRY VORTEX...
CROSS! LOOK OUT!!!

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